



LIBRARY  
OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA.

GIFT OF  
**Mrs. SARAH P. WALSWORTH.**

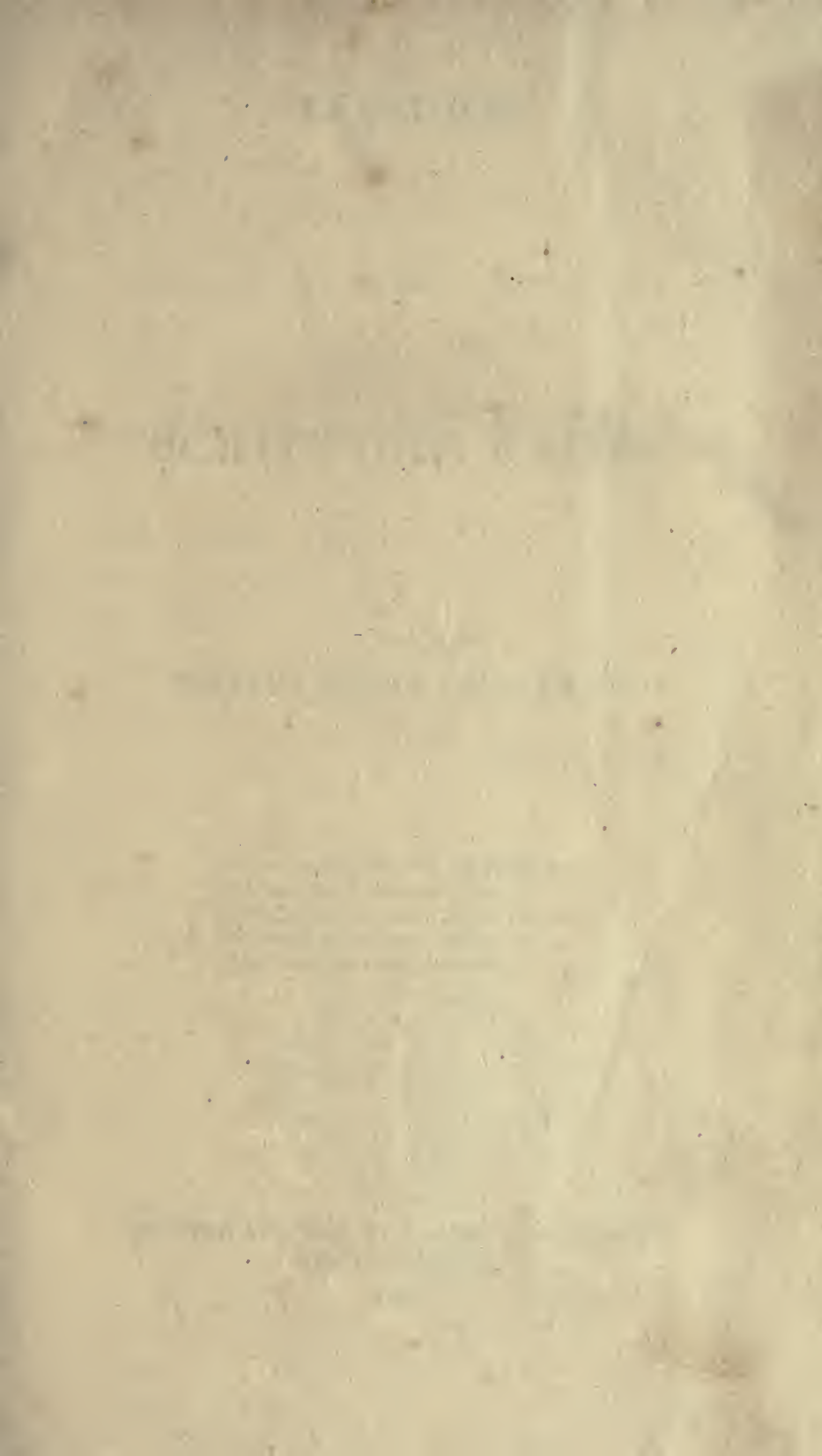
*Received October, 1894.*

*Accessions No.* 57786. *Class No.* .....

E. J. Fairman, 1820

R. Dunning







Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2007 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation

# LECTURES

ON

## SCRIPTURE FACTS.

BY THE REV.

WILLIAM BENGOLLYER, D.D.

—————Monumentum ære perennius,  
Regalique situ Pyramidum altius:  
Quod non imber edax, non Aquilo impotens  
Possit diruere, aut innumerabilis  
Annorum series, et fuga temporum.

HOR.



BOSTON:

PRINTED AND SOLD BY SAMUEL T. ARMSTRONG,

No. 50, CORNHILL,

1813

BS540  
C6

1821

1821

1821

THOMAS LIND ERSKINE

1821

1821

57786

TO THE  
RIGHT HONOURABLE  
**THOMAS LORD ERSKINE,**  
LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR.

MY LORD,

IF flattery be essential to a Dedication, I shall never write one: but in the present instance I have the satisfaction of believing that an attempt at adulation would be as disgusting to your Lordship, as I feel it would be unworthy the dignity of the subject of this volume, and degrading to me as a minister of the sanctuary. It would be easy to tell your Lordship that I admire your talents, and that the world admires them too: this would not be adulation; but it would be a tribute unconnected with the cause of Christianity, and I shall therefore wave it altogether. Permit me, then, to remind your Lordship, that you descend from an ancient and noble House, which piety has distinguished as well as rank; and that in various branches of your family, religion has shed a lustre more dazzling and more glorious than the radiance of nobility. Providence has placed your Lordship high in the sphere of society; and it is in your power to do much to serve the cause of revealed truth. With the confidence inspired by your public and admirable defence of Christianity; and with the affection kindled

by the distinguished honour I have enjoyed in the friendship of an illustrious Relative; I presented, in an early stage of this work, an outline of it to your Lordship, and received from you a note, authorizing me to assume the sanction of your name in the eyes of the public, and expressing, in your own energetic language, your persuasion of the infinite value of "Revelation, without whose hopes and consolations, all human distinctions are nothing." Under these auspices the work was carried on, and is now brought to a conclusion: and I have the honor to present to your candor, with my most grateful acknowledgments, the offspring of your own indulgent patronage. It is my sincere and earnest desire, that the power of that Religion, the evidences of which your judgment approves, may be the consolation of your heart; that its influence may shed a divine light upon the elevated orbit in which you move; and that its unfading honors may be your future recompense, when the distinctions of rank shall indeed be lost, and when the only nobility allowed will consist in an alliance with HIM, who in the days of his pilgrimage upon the earth, had not where to lay his head.

I have the honor to remain,

with high consideration,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's much obliged

and most obedient servant,

WILLIAM BENGO COLLYER.

## PREFACE.

IT would be an unprecedented act, to send into the world, without a preface, a work of the magnitude of this volume; and I am glad to avail myself of the permission and of the opportunity which custom not merely allows, but prescribes, to say something respecting the succeeding Lectures, before they are dismissed to the candor of the public, which could not be said in the course of their delivery.

The history of the publication is simply as follows. It was suggested to me about five years since, in a cursory conversation, that it would be a desirable thing to produce a confirmation of the facts recorded in the sacred writings, from contemporary historians, so far as these could be obtained; and where the remoteness of scriptural narrations stretched beyond the chronology of heathen compositions, to adduce such fragments of antiquity as time has spared to us, so far as they bear any relation to events transpiring at the earliest periods. It was justly observed, that while many and successful efforts have been made, and are daily making, to elucidate and defend the doctrines and the precepts of Christianity, the facts recorded in the Bible have not been placed in the same advantageous point of view. Some have perhaps been deterred by the toil necessary to collect such testimonies, to select from the mass evidences which are more prominent than others, and to discriminate such portions of heathen records as mingle truth with fable,—to detect

and expose the one, and to produce and enforce the other. It is also probable that not a few have declined to adventure upon this plan, because it is so unlike the usual and popular modes of pulpit discussion. Thus while the citadel of revealed religion has been ably and zealously defended, the out-works have been abandoned, or at least overlooked; and the posts where some veterans of old times fought, have, since their removal by death, remained unfilled. Upon revolving this conversation in my mind, I felt that the remark was important, and I began seriously to think of undertaking the proposed discussion, just so far as it might be useful to my own congregation, and would not interfere with the other arrangements of my ministerial labors. My first object was to discover by whom the ground had been trodden before me. I well recollected that Grotius had expressly set apart a portion of his treatise on the Truth of the Christian Religion, to the consideration of Foreign Testimonies: and in that useful little volume will be found many of the authorities produced in the following pages. But Grotius has written in Latin, and is not, therefore, accessible to an English reader. He has been translated; but the plan proposed forms a very small part of his production; and the whole work can only be considered as an epitome of the Evidences of Christianity, where the principal arguments in its favor are enumerated and stated, but never dilated, and seldom more than barely named. Various have been the productions which tend to this point, under the sanction of such illustrious names as Prideaux, Lardner, Briant, Stillingfleet, Pearson, Doddridge, and others. But these all enter only into a part of my scheme; they elucidate a particular portion of the sacred writ-

ings, or advert in general terms to the stability of the whole. Above all it appeared to me that there was yet wanting a work, which might interweave foreign testimonies to the truth of Scripture history, with the discussion of the history itself; which might admit general and important remarks with a selected subject; and which might relieve the barrenness and languor of mere discussion, and of a series of extracts from heathen writers; by assuming the shape and the ardor of pulpit and popular addresses. Such was the design of the Lectures now submitted to the public, and it would ill become me to conjecture how far I have succeeded in filling up the outline. The plan was sketched for the use of my own congregation; and delivered in my own pulpit. It was afterwards desired by some, who perhaps thought too favorably of the execution, that it should be brought into a larger circle; and the Lectures were accordingly delivered during two winters in London. By the importunity of the same persons, the work is now committed to the press; and time must decide (while I anxiously wait its decision) whether I have done well or ill in yielding my private opinion of the demerits of the execution, to their flattering prepossessions in favor of its utility.

Respecting the work itself, I have little to add to the remarks which will be found to introduce the first Lecture. Using freely different writers, I have also candidly acknowledged my obligations to them. I have carefully read over, and have endeavored faithfully to translate the passages produced from antiquity; and separating them from the body of the work, I have preserved their original form for the use of the scholar who may choose to hear them speak their own language, and yet might be unwilling to take the troub-

le to hunt them down through various works, in notes at the end of each Lecture. I have subjoined a list of the names of the principal writers quoted in this work, and have placed over against their names the periods in which they flourished. The list of errata in the work appears large, but will be found in few instances to affect the sense: the principal errors in it are the substitution of one Greek letter for another in various instances. I will venture to affirm that its magnitude has not arisen from my indolence; and the candid Reader will know how to make allowance for imperfections in sending out such a volume as the succeeding one, especially when the correction of the press rested with myself alone; and was performed amid weekly and daily, public and private, pressing engagements.\* I expect to derive much advantage from our public organs of criticism; and to candid criticism, criticism such as it ought always to be, willing to allow a merit as well as a defect, to point out a beauty as well as a fault, I shall always bow with respect, and shall always, be happy to avail myself of its corrections and of its advice. If I could write a faultless volume, I must possess more than human powers: if I have produced one which shall be useful to the cause of truth and religion (and such was my design,) I shall rejoice in my general success; and, I hope, be willing to listen with gratitude to the candor which discovers to me where I have failed.

W. B. C.

BLACKHEATH-HILL, *March 20, 1807.*

\* It was judged unnecessary in this edition to print the notes in their *original* form; but a translation of all of them and references to the originals will be found, either in the Lectures where the quotations are made, or in their order at the end of the volume. The *Errata* mentioned above have been carefully corrected in this edition. AM. ED.

# CONTENTS.

## LECTURE I.

PAGE 7--41.

### INTRODUCTORY—THE NECESSITY OF A DIVINE REVELATION.

JOB, xi, 7—9.—Apology for the undertaking. Statement of the plan of the Lectures--Mode of discussion proposed, by an appeal to the heathen world--Their ignorance of the nature and attributes of God--Commencement of man's errors--Source of polytheism --Rise of image worship--Visible objects--heroes--benefactors- deified --Impurity of their worship--Sacrifice of human victims- Contrasted with Christianity - Their civil institutions- their defective morals-- their systems too refined for the multitude- Universal adaptation of Christianity --Their uncertainty respecting the future, instanced by Homer and by Paul at Athens - Revelation has removed these difficulties-- Infidelity anticipates annihilation--Objections against Revelation refuted-- State of man without it deplorable-- expectation of Socrates--Revelation possible, probable, found in the Bible alone.

## LECTURE II.

PAGE 42--74.

### THE CREATION—THAT THE MOSAIC ACCOUNT OF IT IS THE ONLY RATIONAL ONE WHICH WE HAVE RECEIVED.

GEN. I. 1.—The province of sense, of reason, and, of faith---Incitements to inquire into the origin of all things --all ages have attempted it---The several opinions of mankind reduced to Two--First that the world was produced by chance---examined on acknowledged principles --refuted by Cicero --Appeal to the human frame, and the conversion of Galen---Hypothesis of the Egyptians--a disfigured copy of Moses--hypothesis of modern philosophy--Second opinion, that the world is eternal---By whom held--Refuted by the world's mutability--by philosophical and astronomical laws--by history--by the arts and sciences--by the origin of nations--Objection raised from some recent discoveries in volcanic irruptions considered--tradition of the creation universal--The being of a God inferred, and our connexion with him exhibited--Mosaic account of the Creation--Dr. Geddes--Light created--Longinus--Work of the six days--Inquiries answered--respecting primeval light--astronomy--extent of the Creation--the six days--the information of Moses.

## LECTURE III.

PAGE 75--103.

### THE DELUGE.

GEN. VII, 11--24. 2 PET. III, 5--7. Ruins--apostasy of man--progress of vice--antediluvian longevity--Union between the sons of God and the daughters of men--Giants--State of the world at the time of the Deluge--Plan of the Lecture--The fact established--By the general consent of all nations--Testimonies of Abydenus--Berosus, Lucian--re-

mark of Grotius—By the existence of marine productions on land—Hypothesis of volcanic irruptions examined—objections of Buffon and others opposed—Hypotheses of Burnet, Whiston, M. de la Pryme, and St. Pierre stated—Effected by Divine interposition—Objections, respecting the ark, America, infants, and the rainbow, answered—Improvement—appeal to the last judgment.

## LECTURE IV.

PAGE 104—131.

THE DESTRUCTION OF BABEL, THE CONFUSION OF LANGUAGE,  
THE DISPERSION OF THE PEOPLE, AND THE ORIGIN OF NATIONS.

GEN. XI, 1—9—OBADIAH, 3 & 4.—Noah's mingled emotions, of pity, of gratitude, and of faith—The fear of man impressed upon brutes, and the law for murder—Noah's failing—his death—genealogy of his descendants—his predictions—Nimrod—the original tongue—Situation of Shinar—Building of Babel—its design and form—Imagery of the Bible—Confusion of language, what?—Dispersion of the people, how effected—Origin of nations—supposed—uncertain—Ancient testimonies—Fable of the giants—one of the Sybils—Abydenus—Inquiries—whether the attempt was criminal?—whether man would have separated without a change of language?—whether language would have changed without a miracle?—Improvement—Our errors spring from the pride of our hearts—appeal to Nebuchadnezzar and to Belshazzar—Prosperity often excites rebellion—There can be no security when God is our enemy.

## LECTURE V.

PAGE 131—163.

THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH.

GEN. xix. 15—26. 2 PET. ii, 6.—Domestic scenes of Genesis—contrasted with profane writers...the patriarchal tents welcomed—Abraham introduced—Idolatry of his country—triumphs of faith—titles of Abraham—his infirmity in Egypt—his memorials of gratitude—his separation from Lot—the battle of Siddim, and Lot rescued—Melchisedec—Interview with Jehovah—Religious worship to be guarded—Domestic contention—Hagar's flight—prediction respecting Ishmael—Circumcision, and Abraham's name changed—Three angels visit him—God reveals his designs against Sodom, and Abraham pleads for it—Two angels visit Lot—Danger threatens the city in the morning—Lot hastened—is sent to the mountain—objects—pleads for Zoar—obtains his request—The destruction of Sodom sudden—how effected—the Dead Sea—Lot's wife—Testimonies of Tacitus, Philo, Pliny, Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, and Solinus, to this fact—Modern writers—Evidences remaining on the spot—Representations of the Bible concerning its appearance in different ages—correspondent features remain—testimony of Josephus—Changes supposed to be effected by time, and their immediate causes—The subject improved—Judgments delayed will yet be executed—The righteous are always safe.

## LECTURE VI.

PAGE 164—191.

## THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH.

GEN. xlix, 22--26.—ACTS vii, 9--16.—Intervening history slightly touched—Sacrifice of Isaac—Death of Sarah—Subsequent events enumerated—Joseph's history commences with his mother's death—and at an interesting age—Jacob's partiality, and its effects upon his sons—Joseph's dreams—His brethren remove from home—Joseph visits them—progress of sin in their bosoms, and they resolve to slay him—Reuben's interference—Joseph assumed nothing in consequence of his father's partiality—He is sold, and his coat dyed in blood—Jacob's anxiety and despair—Joseph in Egypt, and in temptation—Joseph in prison, and his acquaintance with Pharaoh's chief butler and baker—The chief butler's ingratitude—Pharaoh's dreams—Joseph's elevation—Justin's remarkable testimony—Joseph's brethren visit Egypt, and know him not—Simeon bound—They return dismayed—Benjamin brought into Egypt—on their second return Benjamin is arrested—Judah pleads for his brother—Joseph discovers himself—Retrospection—They tell their father of his prosperity—Jacob and Joseph meet—Their after-feelings supposed—Jacob introduced to Pharaoh—Israel dies—Joseph's mourning—He returns to fulfil his duties in Egypt—and dies also—Concluding Remarks on Genesis—It relates facts in which we are concerned, and which revelation must necessarily contain—Moses is the author of it—The connexion between it, and the succeeding books, is inseparable.—The historian writes like a man convinced of the truth of that which he advances—The difference between the style of Genesis, and that of his other writings, noticed and accounted for.

## LECTURE VII.

PAGE 192—213.

## A SCRIPTURAL REPRESENTATION OF THE NATURE AND DESTINATION OF MAN.

GEN. ii, 7. JOB xxxii, 8.—Introduction—Vegetable world—Animal world—Man—his natural dignity—What is spirit?—Its operations traced—Understanding—Passions—Memory—Imagination—Dreams—Its separate state—The Soul—sleeping scheme examined—How represented in the Scriptures—capable of separate joys or sufferings—Source of human dignity—Life secretly communicated by God—Intelligence distributed variously by the same hand—Madness—Spiritual knowledge the gift of God—The future existence of the spirit flows from him—Reflections—How high is the destination of the spirit!—Its powers should be devoted to the Deity—How vast is its loss!—How diligently should it be cultivated—Concluding remarks—A skeptic is an enemy to himself and to mankind—Humanity is concerned in the progress of Christianity.

## LECTURE VIII.

PAGE 214—241.

## THE SLAVERY AND DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL IN EGYPT.

GEN. xv, 13, 14. ACTS vii, 35, 36 -- The Bible recalls past events--- Man always man---his information confined to the past and the present--- he knows nothing of the future---Commencement of Exodus--Subject proposed, and its arrangement stated--Changes effected in a few years ---How much often depends upon an individual---Ravages of time impressively portrayed by the inspired writer-- Multiplication of Israel--- Their bondage-- Children slain-- Birth of Moses and his exposure---He is rescued by Pharaoh's daughter---her blindness to the future Education of Moses---Difference between man and man in talents, in literature, in rank of life, and in piety-- Silence of Moses respecting the first 40 years of his life-- He slays the Egyptian---and flies--He marries Zipporah--He approaches the burning bush--his commission opens--he meets the Magicians before Pharaoh-- General statement of his miracles ---Death of the first born--the Israelites depart--Criticism on the word "To Borrow"---They pass the Red Sea---Foreign testimonies to this fact--There was such a person as Moses, proved by Justin and Longinus--He brought Israel from Egypt, proved by Justin, Manetho, Tacitus, Pliny, Trogus Pompeius--The Jews could not have asserted these things, unless they had been true, without detection--Testimony of Numenius---the Jews themselves could not be imposed upon--These facts are kept in remembrance by their rites--Ancient custom of the Egyptians on the day before the Passover--Testimony from Diodorus Siculus--An appeal to Skepticism.

## LECTURE IX.

PAGE 242--266.

## THE JOURNEY OF ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS: THEIR ESTABLISHMENT IN CANAAN; AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDING THESE EVENTS.

JOSHUA xxiv. 2- 13.-- Reason is to the mind what the eye is to the body, and Revelation is to reason what light is to the eye--the one is the organ-- the other the medium--Revelation necessary to elucidate Nature and Providence--and to develope futurity--the Subject stated in its extent, and arranged according to the Scripture history--Character of the Israelites--They murmur for water--Manna and quails sent--a fresh supply of water--Two events distinguished--They subdue Amalek--The Law given--Contrast between Sinai and Calvary--The Golden Calf--the spies bring an evil report of Canaan--A general enumeration of succeeding events-- and the death of Moses---a tribute to his memory --Joshua succeeds him, and the situation of Israel stated --They pass Jordan-- The fall of Jericho-- and the fulfilment of Joshua's curse--A shower of stones, and the sun and moon stand still--Foreign testimonies--Positive evidence from the most ancient writers to the history at large --from Aristobolus, the Orphic verses, Strabo, Juvenal, Diodorus Siculus, Pliny, Tacitus, Calcidius, Hermippus, and the Poets in general--Testimony of Manetho to the antiquity of these events--Circumstantial evidences--

Publicity of the Law--adherence of the Jews to it--its perfection--impossibility of imposition--So also of the miracles of the journey--Customs of the Jews, perpetuated to this hour, refer to these events--Reason for the reservation of the Canaanites--aspect of the whole to the Messiah--Objections--that the conduct of the Israelites was immoral--that it was cruel--that the instruments used to punish these nations were improper--refuted--Improvement--the harmony and success of the designs of God contrasted with human fluctuations--he presides in the councils of princes--It is pleasant to see the gradual developement of his plans--it will be delightful in heaven to review the whole.

## LECTURE X.

PAGE 262--292.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE JEWS--INCLUDING THE THEOCRACY AND MONARCHY, TO THE BUILDING OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE: WITH A CONFIRMATION OF SOME SUBORDINATE FACTS.

1 SAM. VIII. 6--10, & 19, 20. ACTS VII. 44--48. HEB. XI. 32--34  
Revelation to be examined with reverence, with caution, and with candor--Retrospection--the subject stated--An inquiry into the rise of government--The parental and the patriarchal--Nimrod--Origin of monarchy--Selection of Israel--Theocracy--derivation of the term--Three-fold relation of God to the Hebrews--Distinction of the terms, statutes, commandments, judgments, and testimonies--Scripture epithets expressive of God's choice of the Jews--Appointment of their rulers--Samuel and his sons--Expiration of the Theocracy; and in what sense?--Monarchy of the Jews--The change of government displeasing to God--and why?--Saul anointed--his alienation from God--David brought to court--his friendship with Jonathan--Saul and his sons slain--David's lamentation--His succession, his character, and his trials--His design to build a temple--The monarchy traced to its close--absorbed in the spiritual reign of Jesus--Solomon's temple--Evidences respecting it--God's presence unconfined--Subordinate Scripture facts confirmed--Gideon's actions by Sanchoniathon--Jephthæ's vow, by the story of Iphigenia--Sampson's foxes, in Ovid's Roman feasts--Delilah's treachery, in the story of the daughter of Nisus--The strength and valor of Sampson, in the labors of Hercules--The victory of David over the Syrians, by Nichelaus Damascenus--The taking of Jerusalem, and the destruction of Senacharib's army, by Herodotus--The Translation of Elijah, in the story of Phæton--Jonah's preservation by the whale, is related of Hercules by Lycophron, and by Æneus Gazeus--The dearth in the days of Ahab, by Menander--and the fire from Heaven which consumed Elijah's sacrifice, by Cyprian, and by Julian--Conclusion--Christ compared with Solomon.

## LECTURE XI.

PAGE 293--319.

THE CAPTIVITIES OF ISRAEL AND OF JUDAH.

2 KINGS XVII. 1-6. 2 CHRON. XXXVI. 14--21.--The history of empires is the record of the human heart--The Bible makes us acquainted with MEN--Cautions arising from Solomon's fall--Succession of Rehoboam, and division of the kingdom--The captivity of Israel, when? and by whom?--Samaritans--Cause of the captivity--Menander's testimony--

Man's abuses of power--contrasted with the Benevolence of the Deity--  
 Loss of the ten tribes--Inferences--The Messiah was the great object  
 of the Old Testament dispensation--The very existence of the Jews de-  
 pended upon their connexion with the Savior--The captivity of Judah,  
 when? and by whom? Intermediate events--The reading of the roll--  
 Nebuchadnezzar's first vision explained by Daniel--Total ruin of Jerusa-  
 lem--Description of Babylon--Its walls--The bridge and banks of the  
 river--Canals--Palace, hanging gardens, and temple--Nebuchadnezzar's  
 pride and fall; related in his decree--Obscurely hinted in Abydenus--  
 Confirmed by Herodotus--Asserted by Josephus--Gathered from Ptole-  
 my's Canon--His reign and works mentioned by Berosus, Megasthenes,  
 Diocles, and Philostratus--Evil Merodach succeeds him--Then Nerig-  
 lassar--Then Belshazzar--Babylon taken by Cyrus--The Jews restored  
 --Improvement--The facility with which God can punish nations--Eleva-  
 tion sometimes bestowed upon the worst of characters--The power of  
 the wicked limited--War a dreadful curse--Let us seek a better world!

## LECTURE XII.

PAGE 320—347.

### THE LIFE, DEATH, RESURRECTION, AND ASCENSION OF JESUS CHRIST, PROVED AS MATTERS OF FACT.

LUKE II, 1-7. 1 COR. XV, 3-8. 2 PET. I, 16.--Sublimity allied to  
 terror--God alike great in every point of view--The former dispensa-  
 tion has yielded to one more simple and more spiritual--The obscurity of  
 antiquity left behind--The subject stated--It relates to facts transpiring  
 in the zenith of the glory of Rome--Expectations of the world at this  
 period--Extract from Virgil's *Pollio*--compared with Isaiah's predictions  
 --Tranquillity of all nations--The decree of Augustus--Conjectures  
 respecting this tax, and its extent--Hms of the East--Poverty of the Sa-  
 vior's birth--It is announced to the Shepherds--Journey of the Magi--  
 who they were--the star which conducted them--their country--Testi-  
 monies of Pliny and Chalcidius to this circumstance--Cruelty of Herod  
 --Evidence that Christ had been in Egypt--Testimony of Josephus res-  
 pecting him--Julian, Porphyry, and Celsus allow his works--His death  
 --Acts of Pilate--asserted by Justin Martyr and Tertullian--Manner of  
 it mentioned by Tacitus and by Lucian--Miracles attending his death--  
 Darkness supernatural--Testimony of Phlegon--of Suidas--and the re-  
 mark of Dionysius the Areopagite--Burial of the Savior--Evidences of  
 the resurrection--Plea of the guards answered in seven different ways--  
 Ascension--Testimony of Pliny to the early worship of Christ--General  
 evidences of Quadratus--Tertullian, and Arnobius--Improvement--Re-  
 velation resembles the guiding Star--in its nature--in its source--in its  
 object--and in its issue.

## LECTURE XIII.

PAGE 348—376.

### THE CHARACTER OF THE WRITERS OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

1 JOHN I, 1-3. HEB. XI, 56-58.--Sensations excited in heaven and  
 upon earth, by the Ascension--The subject stated--The books of the  
 Old and New Testaments were really written by those whose names they  
 bear, proved by the Testimony of their countrymen, and the consent

of all nations—They were for the most part eye-witnesses of the facts which they recorded—What they did not see they derived from the most certain evidences—Their integrity—Their impartiality—Their candor—Their wisdom—Their holiness—Their lives contrasted with those of their opponents—Their motives disinterested—proved by their actions—and by their preaching—Their testimony respecting themselves—They believed what they taught—proved by their sufferings—They were guided by that which they preached—proved by the correspondence of their lives—They could not be deceived in the facts which they relate—They would not deceive—proved from their acknowledged characters—and from their criminality, supposing it possible—Their views stated, and their prejudices—Their appeals considered—The concession of their enemies—Improvement—The allowances to be made in reading the scriptures—and the spirit in which they should be consulted.

## LECTURE XIV.

PAGE 377—397.

THE UNSEARCHABLE GOD: OR, AN ATTEMPT TO PROVE AN ANALOGY BETWEEN THE RELIGION OF NATURE AND THAT OF THE BIBLE, BY SHEWING THAT THE SAME OBSCURITY WHICH OVERSHADOWS REVELATION, EQUALLY OVERSPREADS NATURE AND PROVIDENCE.

JOB xxxvi. 14 —Man, a needy dependent creature—in his infancy—his childhood—his youth—his manhood—his death—Revelation meets him on the terms of his nature—Magnitude, beauty, and wisdom, comparative terms—Limitation of human powers—Created minds swallowed up in the Deity—The subject stated—God unsearchable in the works of creation—Ignorance of man in early ages—Progress of philosophy—Our present ignorance of the planetary system—Attempts to reach the poles frustrated—Our ignorance of the minutiae of nature, and of the structure of the human frame—God unsearchable in providence—Its mysteries relative to empires—The assistance of Revelation—Its perplexities relative to individuals—Partial illumination from the Bible—Our ignorance of the invisible worlds—These were once unknown altogether—Their existence is now clearly proved in the Scriptures—Their nature in general is ascertained—But few particulars respecting them have transpired—God unsearchable in the word of Revelation—Its general truths exhibited—Its promises—Concession respecting its difficulties: but in this very point consists its analogy with nature and providence—These all are but partial views of the Deity—The thunder of his power is inconceivable—Illustrations—Conclusion.

|                                | B. C. | A.D.                           |
|--------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------|
| ORPHEUS . . . . .              | 1000  | Chalcidius—in the third cen-   |
| Hesiod . . . . .               | 900   | tury                           |
| Homer . . . . .                | 850   | Arnobius . . . . .             |
| Sanchoniathan . . . . .        | 760   | Porphyrus . . . . .            |
| Xenophanes . . . . .           | 620   | Eusebius . . . . .             |
| Herodotus } born . . . . .     | 484   | Julian . . . . .               |
| died . . . . .                 | 413   | Cyrrillus } of Alexandria      |
| Plato . . . . .                | 348   | } of Jerusalem                 |
| Aristotle . . . . .            | 322   | Epiphanius—died . . . . .      |
| Diocles . . . . .              | 321   | Aeneas Gazeus . . . . .        |
| Abydenus . . . . .             | 300   | Alexander Trallianus . . . . . |
| Megasthenes . . . . .          | 298   | Hermippas . . . . .            |
| Menander . . . . .             | 293   | Rhodigenus } uncertain         |
| Strato Lampsacenus . . . . .   | 288   | Numenius }                     |
| Lycophron . . . . .            | 276   | Eupolemus }                    |
| Manetho . . . . .              | 261   |                                |
| Aristobulus . . . . .          | 124   |                                |
| Diodorus Siculus . . . . .     | 44    |                                |
| Cicero . . . . .               | 43    |                                |
| Trogus Pompeius . . . . .      | 41    |                                |
| Catullus . . . . .             | 40    |                                |
| Virgil . . . . .               | 18    |                                |
|                                | A. D. |                                |
| Nicholaus Demascenus . . . . . | 6     |                                |
| Suidas . . . . .               | 11    |                                |
| Ovid . . . . .                 | 17    |                                |
| Strabo . . . . .               | 25    |                                |
| Apion . . . . .                | 35    |                                |
| Philo—about . . . . .          | 50    |                                |
| Lucanus . . . . .              | 65    |                                |
| Seneca . . . . .               | 65    |                                |
| Pliny the elder . . . . .      | 80    |                                |
| Solinus . . . . .              | 81    |                                |
| Josephus—died . . . . .        | 93    |                                |
| Pliny the younger . . . . .    | 103   |                                |
| Plutarch . . . . .             | 119   |                                |
| Juvenal . . . . .              | 128   |                                |
| Ælian . . . . .                | 140   |                                |
| Justin . . . . .               | 148   |                                |
| Justin Martyr . . . . .        | 163   |                                |
| Lucian . . . . .               | 180   |                                |
| Origen . . . . .               | 200   |                                |
| Clemens Alexandrinus . . . . . | 220   |                                |
| Philostratus . . . . .         | 241   |                                |
| Ocellus Lucanus . . . . .      | 250   |                                |
| Cyprian . . . . .              | 258   |                                |
| Longinus . . . . .             | 273   |                                |
| Tacitus . . . . .              | 276   |                                |
|                                |       | MODERNS.                       |
|                                |       | Pearson . . . . .              |
|                                |       | Grotius . . . . .              |
|                                |       | Usher . . . . .                |
|                                |       | Milton . . . . .               |
|                                |       | Addison . . . . .              |
|                                |       | Rollin . . . . .               |
|                                |       | Saurin . . . . .               |
|                                |       | Burnet . . . . .               |
|                                |       | Whiston . . . . .              |
|                                |       | M. de la Pryme . . . . .       |
|                                |       | Taylor . . . . .               |
|                                |       | Prideaux . . . . .             |
|                                |       | Bryant . . . . .               |
|                                |       | Shaw . . . . .                 |
|                                |       | Pocoke . . . . .               |
|                                |       | Volney . . . . .               |
|                                |       | Bisselius . . . . .            |
|                                |       | Allix . . . . .                |
|                                |       | Doddridge . . . . .            |
|                                |       | Horne . . . . .                |
|                                |       | Poole . . . . .                |
|                                |       | Bruce . . . . .                |
|                                |       | Watson . . . . .               |
|                                |       | Geddes . . . . .               |
|                                |       | Burn . . . . .                 |
|                                |       | St. Pierre . . . . .           |
|                                |       | Ancient Universal History      |
|                                |       | Humphrys's Annotations         |
|                                |       | Encyclopedia Britannica        |



# LECTURES

ON

## SCRIPTURE FACTS.

### LECTURE I.

#### INTRODUCTORY—THE NECESSITY OF A DIVINE REVELATION.

JOB XI, 7—9.

*Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea!*

**T**O enlarge the sphere of knowledge, and to increase the sum of happiness in the present world, is an object worthy the attention of every friend of human nature; and the effort, even should it fail, deserves the approbation and the applause of wise and good men: but to provide consolation against the severest moments of trial, to disperse the cloud which hangs over "the valley of the shadow of death," and to conduct the immortal spirit safe to the throne of the invisible God, is a purpose far more sublime, and an exertion of still greater utility. To shed lustre over a few years, or to live in remembrance a century or two, and then to be forgotten, is comparatively of small importance: yet for this the scholar labors, and the hero endures hardship—this is the summit of human ambition, and the boundary of its most sanguine expectations. To shine on the roll of science, to pluck honors which fade like

the flower of the field, while you gather them, or to sparkle among the favorites of fortune, is of little avail to man, who must soon resign to the merciless grasp of death, even the sceptre of the world, were it committed to his possession. Yet these things are sought amid repeated disappointments; and the golden bait is received with increased avidity, although barbed with anguish and sorrow. But who regards the silent finger of religion pointing to an inheritance above the stars, promising splendors which shall never expire, and waiting to crown the man, who obeys her gracious admonitions, with honor, glory, and immortality?

When I remember the occasion on which I stand before this large assembly, and the awful engagement which, at the solicitation of many among you, I have undertaken—I shrink from my subject, and enter upon the discussion of it with “fear and trembling.” To throw down the gauntlet, and to enter the list with winning and attractive fashion, is a bold and daring effort. It will be admitted that this is a day of prevailing infidelity; and surely it will also be allowed, that it is the duty of every man, who sustains the sacred office of a Christian minister, to “contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints,” and to “give a reason for the hope that is in him.” On this principle the Lecturer presumes to offer his mite to the Lord of the Treasury towards the support of this great and common cause. It may be asked, why hoary age should not rather enter upon this arduous work? Would to God that more efforts were made on the part of able and faithful ministers, equally venerable for years and for literature, against the common enemy! Those, however, who imagine that age should exclusively wield the “two-edged sword” against skepticism, will do well to re-

member, that the opposite cause is not supported altogether, or for the most part, by years, experience, and learning. No, these are far from being exclusively our opponents: The young, the inexperienced, and the illiterate, have united with the sage and the philosopher, against the claims and obligations of revelation. While even school-boys daringly renounce a system which they have not examined, which they cannot, alas! appreciate, and embrace one which they do not understand, may it not be permitted to a young man to say something in favor of a volume, which, if he should not succeed in defending it, he can truly say he admires and loves? Let the wise and the learned rouse to action, and produce their "strong reasons"—I shall be among the first to sit at their feet: but upon persons of my own age, I feel that I have a peculiar claim; I trust that they will hear me with candor and respect; and for them principally I have suffered this engagement to be announced to the public. Let youth be opposed to youth, age to age, talent to talent. Let the enemies of revelation know, that we can ascend to their eminence, or sink to their level. Let it be seen, that some are growing up to support the Redeemer's kingdom, while others finish their course, and are gathered to their fathers.

It may be said, that so many have undertaken this cause, and acquitted themselves so ably, that neither any thing new can be advanced, nor is it indeed necessary. It is readily granted, that I am to tread in a beaten track; but while skepticism continues to press upon us old objections in new forms, we must follow their example in refuting those objections: and it is as necessary as it ever was to oppose the standard of truth to that of error, so long as our adversaries determine to keep the field, and to maintain the combat. So far from flattering

myself that I am striking out a new path, I shall professedly set before you, from time to time, such arguments and testimonies as I am able to collect from others; and shall freely use every author that may be servicable to the cause which I attempt to defend. And if I shall be able to set an old argument in a new light, or even to bring one to remembrance only, I shall be satisfied to be regarded a compiler of evidences, rather than a creator of them; I shall be amply rewarded for my labor, nor will you regret your attendance. When however, I recollect, that we all gather our stores of knowledge from the writings or conversation of others; that the experience and observation of the wisest of men could furnish him with comparatively little intelligence, were it never permitted to advance beyond its own immediate sphere; and when in addition to these considerations, I remember that every man has his own train of thinking, and a mode of expression peculiar to himself, I flatter myself that all which shall be said, will not be borrowed, if all is not exclusively my own; and that something may be advanced in the course of these lectures, which, if it should not surprise by its novelty, may be candidly received for its justness, and attract by its simplicity and sincerity. .

It will be proper, in a few words, to state the immediate purpose of these lectures, and the object of the plan which I am about to suggest: it is simply to meet skepticism on its own ground in relation to first principles. Is it asserted that the facts recorded in this volume have no evidence? We shall endeavor to prove that they are furnished with all the evidence which events so remote can have, and which reason ought to require of time. Is it said that Christianity is a modern invention? On the contrary, if our pur-

pose be established, it will appear as old as the creation. Is the authority of the scriptures questioned? We will produce other testimonies. Is its history condemned as absurd? We shall attempt to shew that it is perfectly rational; and that all evidences weighed, and all circumstances considered, it is clear that events could not have taken place otherwise than as they are recorded. Is it objected, that it claims support from miracles? It will follow from our representations, if they are made with the strength and clearness which we desire, that such a book, so written, and so supported, could it be proved to be false, would be of itself a greater miracle than any which appears upon its pages. The facts which it records, are the immediate subjects of examination in the present course of lectures; and these will be considered in connexion with their history, and confirmed by foreign and ancient testimony, under the following arrangement.

1. The present lecture, which is merely introductory, will be an attempt to prove the necessity of a divine Revelation.

2. The Creation: that the Mosaic account of it is the only rational one which we have received:

3. The Deluge:

4. The destruction of Babel, the confusion of language, the dispersion of the people, and the origin of nations:

5. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha:

6. The history of Joseph; which will bring us to the close of Genesis:

7. Intermediate Lecture: a scriptural representation of the nature and destination of man:

8. The slavery and deliverance of Israel in Egypt:

9. The journey of the Israelites in the wilderness;

their establishment in Canaan; and the circumstances attending these events:

10. The government of the Jews; including the theocracy and monarchy, to the building of Solomon's Temple; with a confirmation of some subordinate facts recorded in the scriptures.

11. The captivities of Israel and Judah:

12. The life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, proved as matters of fact:

13. The character of the writers of the Old and New Testament:

14. Concluding Lecture—the unsearchable God; or, an attempt to prove an analogy between the religion of nature and that of the Bible, by shewing that the same obscurity which overshadows revelation, equally overspreads nature and providence.

The present subject of discussion is,

#### THE NECESSITY OF A DIVINE REVELATION.

A fair trial of the powers of human reason was made during that long and dreary period in which the scriptures were confined within the walls of Jerusalem, and the world at large was left in the unmolested exercise of all the means furnished by nature and philosophy, to conduct the mind to God. To that period we shall therefore recur; and shall endeavor to ascertain what were the discoveries made by the most enlightened among the Heathens, respecting the nature of Deity, the relation which he bears to us, the obligations under which we are laid to him, the consequences of death, the secrets of futurity, and all those things which are so interesting to man, as an immortal being. It is fair to judge of the powers of nature and of reason, from the effects produced by their agency,

when they were left altogether to themselves. It is unfair in the advocates of skepticism to avail themselves of the superior intelligence afforded by revelation, and to use this knowledge against the volume from which they derived it. It is not possible to determine with any degree of precision, what discoveries the unassisted light of reason is capable of making, while it is aided, and indeed absorbed, by the superior illumination of revealed religion; it must therefore be admitted, that a fair and accurate investigation of its powers, can only be made by looking at it as it really appeared when it was seen alone. We ask with confidence, whether at that period of the world, when science unveiled all her splendors, and irradiated the discovered globe from pole to pole; when philosophy sat upon her throne enjoying the zenith of her power; and when reason had attained the meridian of her glory; a system more honorable to God, more adapted to the wants and the felicity of man, and more productive of moral excellence, than that which is suggested in the Scriptures, was produced? We defy skepticism to answer in the affirmative. Did the mild philosophy of Socrates and of Plato; did the elegant mind of Cicero; did all the heathen philosophers in their combined exertions, ever produce such affecting elucidations of divine goodness, such consoling demonstrations of divine mercy, such delightful discoveries of life and immortality? They never did. And we shall attempt to prove to you the necessity of a divine revelation from the state of the world, at that very period when these eminent persons flourished. We shall not cause to pass before you, rude and barbarous nations; but we shall bring to the test scientific Greece, learned and polite Athens, polished, proud, imperial Rome. We solicit your attention to

## I. THEIR SUPERSTITIONS AND RITES OF WORSHIP:

## II. THEIR CIVIL INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR DEFECTIVE MORALS:

## III. THEIR UNCERTAIN CONJECTURES IN RELATION TO FUTURITY.

## I. THEIR SUPERSTITIONS AND RITES OF WORSHIP.

And in contemplating the state of religion during the boasted reign of reason and philosophy, we cannot but be struck with their ignorance of

## 1. THE NATURE AND THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

When man was left to wander over this wide globe without one cheering ray to guide his feet, the light of nature excepted, the progression of erroneous conclusions founded upon one false principle was rapid and extensive. He beheld this fair world covered with every thing necessary to his existence, and to his enjoyments. Spring enchanted all his senses: a summer's sun poured his glories around him: autumn furnished his table; and experience taught him to secure her bounty in his rude habitation, while the blasts of winter howled round his dwelling, and spread desolation over the plains. He perceived that these seasons regularly returned, and that they departed in their order. He concluded that they had their appointed periods; and this suggested to him the conviction of a supreme, over-ruling Intelligence. In every nation, and in every age, the conception of the being of a God, presented itself to the human mind; and an Atheist was a monster even in the days of heathenism. He had no clear conception, however, of spirit distinct from matter; and therefore conjectured that this God might be visible. HERE COMMENCED HIS ERRORS. He looked around in search of this great first cause. He beheld the sun as he performed his apparent journey

round the globe. When his beams were tempered with gentleness, it was spring: when they poured their most fervid radiance upon the earth, it was summer: their continued vivification produced the maturity of autumn; and their total absence, or partial influence, the storms and the gloom of winter. But, when he re-appeared, the snow dissolved, rivers flowed afresh, and the face of nature was renewed. Of all the objects around him, which could be so likely to be the God of nature? or, in the eye of philosophy itself, what presented so perfect a resemblance of the Deity? The Persian raised him an altar, and bowed with fervor before his shrine.

But the sun was not the only benefactor of man. Night spread her mantle over him, and he sought repose. The moon lighted him from his labor, and diffused a silvery, partial illumination upon the face of creation, which before her rising was enveloped in perfect obscurity. In her appearance she resembled the ruler of the day; and the conclusion was irresistible, that she ought to divide with him the honors of worship. Thus while the sun scorched the head of the adoring Persian: the worshippers of the moon rent the air with shouting, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." Still but *two* of the hosts of heaven were considered. The smaller appearances of light, kindled in the skies, during the absence of the sun, were deemed of the same nature, and supposed to answer the same purposes, with the larger; and it was at length inferred that they also should be remembered as objects of adoration; although possibly *subordinately* to the others, as they were inferior in glory. HENCE SPRANG POLYTHEISM.

The arts and sciences in the mean time advanced;

and while they were erecting for themselves splendid habitations, they thought that their deities ought to derive some honor from the enlargement of useful knowledge. Temples arose, and altars were elevated. There the worshipper adored his supposed deity with greater convenience. A resemblance of his God occurred to his mind, as desirable. The idea was eagerly adopted. On some altars the fire flamed, as the purest emblem of the sun. Others copied the figure of the waxing moon, and described a crescent. Others adored the resemblance of a star.\* But the Egyptian ever ready in symbols, considered the qualities of his deities; and whether they were energy or fervor as in the sun, or gentleness and softness as in the moon, he represented them by the unbending strength of manhood, or the mild, dignified chastity of the woman. When the mind had once seized the counterpart of its imaginary god in nature, there quickly sprang up an Apollo, and a Hercules, and a Diana. HERE AROSE IMAGE-WORSHIP.

Nor did human infatuation end here. Every object around them was deified. The heavens, the air, the sea, the very earth, were adored under the names of Jupiter, Juno, Neptune, and Cybele. The catalogue was swelled to infinity! Their fellow men whom they either feared or loved, were exalted to heavenly dominion. A conqueror deluged the world in blood. Desolation attended his footsteps. The wreath with which he bound his forehead was nurtured in the field of slaughter, and washed in the tears of widows and orphans. Sighs filled the floatings of his banner; and he drove his chariot with frozen insensibility over the slain in the midst of the battle. He was a curse to the earth, and execrated by the nations. He enlarged indeed

\* Acts vii, 43.

the limits of his empire; but every inch of ground added to his own dominions, was an encroachment upon those of his neighbors, and was purchased at the expense of the heart's blood of his contemporaries. After his death, dazzled by his exploits, his infatuated subjects paid him divine honors, and placed him among their worthless deities. One man taught his countrymen to cast seed into the ground, after it had been broken up, and thus to cause "the little one to become a thousand:" and he was worshipped as presiding over the fruits of the earth. Another availed himself of the cloudless atmosphere of Babylon, and ascending a lofty tower, made early observations on the heavenly bodies: he was adored as the king of heaven. A third by dint of attention, foretold the return of periodical winds; and he was worshipped as having charge of the storms, under the name of *Æolus*. A fourth crossed the ocean, and in a frail bark committed himself to the mercy of the winds and waves. Both the hero and his ship were instantly translated to the skies; and at this hour a constellation in the heavens bears their name, and keeps the daring enterprise in remembrance. While a fifth discovering medicinal virtues in plants, and applying them with success in certain cases, became the god of medicine, was said to unpeople the grave, and was adored under the name of *Esculapius*.\* To pursue the subject, would be useless and wearisome; every part of the heavens, the earth, the air, the sea, and the supposed infernal world, was crowded with deities; and every succeeding tyrant, as the first act of his reign, gave his merciless predecessor a place among the gods.

While they all professedly admitted that there was

\* See note 1, at the end of the Volume.

one supreme being who presided over their multiplied divinities, and held them all in subjection, they perpetually disagreed on the point to whom this honor belonged; and the supreme deity of one country, held only a subordinate place in another.

Respecting the attributes of the objects of their worship, they discovered unequalled ignorance and impiety. We are compelled to draw a veil over the principles and operations of these pretended deities; for the tale is too gross to recite in the ear of modesty; and the picture could not meet the eye, without calling up a blush of shame, sorrow, and indignation, on the cheek of innocence. Who must not shudder with horror when he reads, that these sons of reason and philosophy, ascribed to the holy and invisible God, uncleanness, and every detestable vice?\* We will pass on from the nature and number of their deities, to consider,

2. **THEIR WORSHIP OF GOD.** Their religious adoration, so called, was such as would have been better suited to the house of an harlot, than to the temple of God. Lasciviousness was sanctioned, encouraged, and practised, under the holy and venerable name of religion. The more infamous the rites, the more acceptable were they supposed to be to the Deity. The apostle Paul has delineated in strong colors, the affecting depravity of that dreary and comfortless period.

“Because when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imagination; and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools; and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God,

\* The gross impurity to which this paragraph alludes, was principally ascribed in the mythology of the heathens to Jupiter, their *supreme deity*.

into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness — Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever, amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections.”—

The whole of this awful and well-founded accusation, which contains in it things not to be so much as named among us, is given in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, from the twenty-first verse to the end. And he who has read the Satires of Juvenal, or is at all acquainted with the history of those times, cannot dispute for a moment the fidelity of the apostle’s testimony.

It is the first principle of our nature to believe the existence of a God; and the first dictate of our reason, that, admitting this existence, we are bound to serve him, to obey him, and to sacrifice whatever we hold most dear to his demand. This is the dictate of reason, assisted or unassisted by the light of revelation. The Bible has directed this conviction to a proper object; and has specified the sacrifice which we should make, and the offering which duty requires us to present, when it says, “I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” When “darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people,” the self-same principles were held; but alas! they were not directed to a right object! It is affecting to see the wretched and ignorant sons of men obeying the dictates of reason on this point, and, convinced that sacrifices ought to be presented to the Deity, concluding that he was

“altogether such an one as themselves,” and forming a false estimate of his character and perfections, offering all that was most precious to them, to the extinction of parental feeling, and in contempt of the voice of humanity. See yonder Druid, with fierceness glaring in his eyes, and the consecrated branch in his hand, polluting thy soil, O Britain! with the ashes of hundreds of victims consumed in an enormous image! But soft—we promised to produce examples only from polished nations, and from empires at the zenith of their glory. And we shall not have read far in the pages which record the brightest splendors of antiquity, before we find the “pitiful woman,” offering her first born for her “transgression, the fruit of the body for the sin of the soul;” the mother “forgetting her sucking child,” and “ceasing to have compassion upon the son of her womb.” My heart fails me, and the blood curdles in my veins with horror, when I recollect that it was a custom common among the Carthaginians to sacrifice children to Saturn. The statue of that idol was of brass, and formed with extended arms; but so constructed, as to suffer whatever was placed upon them, to fall into a fierce fire; flaming in a furnace at the foot of the image. The trembling parent approached with a countenance of ease which ill concealed the anguish of the heart, and presented his child. The distracted mother imprinted, with a parched lip, a last kiss upon the blooming cheek of her smiling infant. The ferocious priest, clothed in scarlet, received the unconscious babe from the maternal embrace; and placing it on the arms of this infernal image, it fell into the fire. At that instant the drums were beat, and the air rang with acclamations from the surrounding multitude, to cover the agony of the bereaved parents, and

to drown the shrieks of the consuming victim! On one occasion,\* two hundred children of the first families in Carthage were thus immolated! and on their annual sacrifices, those who had no children were accustomed to purchase those of the poor for this horrible purpose.†

These are thy boasted triumphs, O reason! May God graciously preserve to us the teachings of the scriptures! At this mournful review of the blood-stained trophies of cruel and inexorable superstition, surely every parent must feel the necessity, and value the blessing of a divine Revelation! Hail Christianity! It was thine to teach us “a more excellent way:” it was thine to overthrow the altars erected to an “unknown God,” and defiled with human blood: it was thine to do away the impure rites which cannot be named without a blush, for the weakness and the wickedness of human nature: it was thine to roll the dark protentious cloud from the understanding: it was thine to demand the peaceful, noble sacrifice of the body by the crucifixion of its lusts and passions! And it is a *reasonable* service; for it is consonant with the purest dictates of reason: it is not a grievous service: it violates no principle of nature: it tortures no feeling of humanity. It is the *only* reasonable service which man can offer, and which is worthy the acceptance of Deity: yet which, but for the light of Revelation, had never been discovered. Thy peace-speaking voice requires no blood to be shed; for the “sacrifice for sin” has already been presented in the death of Jesus Christ: it requires no mortification of our feelings but such as are depraved, and which were introduced into the mind by sin; but which are

\* When Agathocles was about to besiege Carthage.

† Plutarch de Superstitione. See also note 2, at the end of the volume.

not the genuine feelings of humanity, because they were not implanted in the day when God made man "in his own image." The only slaughter demanded on thy altar, is that of vice and immorality, of a bitter, unforgiving spirit, of a proud, imperious, untractable disposition, of a useless, ungodly life!

But we pass on to another review of the state of the heathen world; and argue the necessity of a divine revelation, from

## II. THEIR CIVIL INSTITUTIONS; AND THEIR DEFECTIVE MORALS.

1. THEIR CIVIL INSTITUTIONS. Vice was tolerated; the principles of humanity were violated; and parental feelings tortured. Suicide was esteemed the strongest mark of heroism; and the perpetrators of it, who ought to have been branded with everlasting infamy, were celebrated by their historians and poets, as men of superior minds. Implacable hatred to enemies was deemed a virtue; and an unforgiving spirit was cherished, and esteemed manly fortitude. Hamilcar, the father of Hannibal, caused his child, at the age of nine years, to swear, that he would never be reconciled to the Romans. The infamous traffic with human blood was permitted in its utmost extent; and, alas! is continued this day among nations professedly Christian: although the mild and gentle precepts of the gospel plead against it; and religion and humanity unite their voices to demand of the oppressor, "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth from the ground!" Permission was given to the citizens, on certain occasions, to kill their slaves. One of the wisest legislators of the heathen world, commanded that all children should be exposed, who appeared in any

respect maimed or defective, and thus was the horrible practice of destroying infants who did not seem likely to be of service to the state, not merely openly tolerated, but expressly instituted. The result of these prevailing opinions and pernicious institutions, was as might be expected,

2. A MOST DEFECTIVE SYSTEM OF MORALS. Depravity was the inevitable consequence of so barbarous a system. The world was an aceldama—a perpetual scene of violence on some occasions, when it was agitated by ambition; and on others, in seasons of peace, was polluted by every abominable and nameless vice. Virtue was a mere shadow—a name. It was serviceable as a subject of eulogy in the schools; but was little reduced to practice; and for the most part, their very virtues leaned to the side of unnatural severity. In the fragments of antiquity, we meet with some beautiful pieces of morality: but unfortunately the history of those times proves, that the deportment even of the persons who wrote these admirable precepts, contradicted all their recommendations; and that they broke, one by one, every rule which they prescribed to others. We are moved with pity in reviewing ages when men thought and wrote so well; and lived so immorally. So many vices were called by the name of virtue, that it is difficult to imagine, what they would call vice, save cowardice. Their most eminent and enlightened characters were guilty of crimes not to be recited; and the general character of the whole heathen world was, that they were “given over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which were not convenient.” The palaces of the Cæsars raised their imperial turrets to the skies, crowned with matchless magnificence: but within, they were stained with every species of impurity. It

is not possible to read the account given of these monarchs who held the sceptre of the world, without pity and indignation. The narration of Suetonius, alternately elevates and depresses, informs and pollutes the mind of the reader: and if one moment we follow the warrior through his victories with delight, and participate his triumph, the next discovers him to us in his retirement, an object of horror and disgust, "committing all manner of uncleanness with greediness." The general contamination may well be imagined, when Horace obscures his genius with shameless indecency, and the elegant pen of Virgil sullied his pages with impurity. I dare not refer to my authority for this mortifying statement; but it is a subject which, alas, admits of no dispute. We observe in general, respecting the heathen world,

3. THAT THEIR SYSTEMS WERE TOO REFINED FOR THE COMMON PEOPLE. And here Christianity triumphs. Its morality is pure, simple, intelligible, adapted to the meanest capacity. All other religions on the face of the earth were formed, for the most part, for the rich, and for the wise. This was a grand defect in their system. Their theology was so complex, that the philosopher alone could comprehend its refinements, while the vulgar were abused with the grossest fables, as a substitute for religion. Its mysteries were professedly held back from the scrutiny of the crowd. But the gospel is the consolation of the poor. It has no mysteries which are dark to a plain understanding, and fathomable by the wise: no mysteries but such as are necessarily beyond the limited comprehension of reason; therefore equally obscure to the peasant and to the philosopher. Of its fundamental principles, "a way-faring man" is a competent judge; and they descend

to the level of his uncultured intellect. Other religions required splendid sacrifices, such as a poor man could not present; priestly demands were made, beyond his ability of performance; and the temple was barred against him, because he could not pay the fee of entrance. But the religion of Jesus addresses itself to every description of men; and hides the poor under the shadow of its wings, from the ills and the injuries of life. Its adaptation to human infirmity, is universal. Other religions were the religions of the city, of the empire, of the century: and varied with the changes of custom. But Christianity is equally suited to the East, the West, the North, or the South; it is adapted to the European, the African, the Asiatic, and the American: all are implicated in the charges it brings against human nature, all are drawn in the characters it delineates, and all are interested in the discoveries which it makes of life and immortality. But we forbear—we are not desirous to pronounce an eulogium on Revelation, but to prove its necessity from the state of the heathen world before its introduction; in order to which, we request your attention further, to

### III.—THEIR UNCERTAIN CONJECTURES IN RELATION TO FUTURITY.

To the mind even of the philosopher, futurity was like the chaos of Moses, fathomless, empty, without shape or order, and “darkness was upon the face of the deep.” The poets sang of Elysian fields and Tartarean punishments; but these were regarded as the flights of an ardent imagination; and the fictions under which their theories were buried, were openly rejected by the wisest among them. Who does not pity the genius of the immortal Homer, laboring under

the pressure of this mournful ignorance? In vain he stretches the wing of his imagination to penetrate the secrets of futurity—not an object could be seen through the gloom. In vain he would carry the torch of reason into the world of spirits—the shadows of death extinguish it. When he draws the picture of eternity with the pencil of fancy, he makes his greatest hero prefer a miserable life, laden with all the woes of this valley of tears, to the highest honors which can be bestowed after death.\* Some of the most enlightened among them, agitated the question respecting the immortality of the soul; yet their reasoning led them no higher than conjecture, and they could not attain the firmness of persuasion. Nor had it ever entered into their most sanguine expectations respecting the body, that HE who first constructed the machine, and took it in pieces, should again put it together, and frame it for immortality. This was an idea so totally novel to them, that when Paul preached at the Areopagus, before the polished and enlightened Athenians, “Jesus and the resurrection of the dead, some mocked:” others said, “He seemeth to be a setter forth of new gods;” while a few concluded that they would “hear him again of this matter.”

Revelation has done that for man, which neither reason nor philosophy could effect. In the exercise of the powers of our mind, upon the scenery by which we are surrounded, we rise to the great parent of all; and deduce some conclusions respecting his nature, from the operations of his hand: yet have we seen that these conclusions were frequently erroneous. The religion of nature cannot go further than to teach us, that there is a God, all-powerful, all-wise, all-good;

\* See note 3, at the end of the volume.

and this is more than it taught the heathen world perfectly. But it leaves us ignorant of our relation to him: it is unable to unravel the more interesting parts of his character; it cannot develope the harmony of his attributes. A thousand inquiries are suggested, to which we receive no answer. We are placed in circumstances for which, on principles of reason, we cannot account; and perceive the existence of evil, unable to discover its source. We labor under a curse, from which, by the light of nature, we see no deliverance; and are in possession of an existence, for which we perceive no adequate end. Those things which are the most interesting, are also the most uncertain; and that which we know naturally, only serves to kindle a thirst to learn more, which, on the principles of nature and reason merely, cannot be satiated. For what has the light of philosophy done, but rendered darkness visible? It has strained the powers of reason and imagination, till they could be stretched no further; yet without bringing one hidden truth to light. It has perplexed and bewildered the mind by contradictory hypotheses. It has exhausted the charms of eloquence, and enervated the force of argument, in establishing favorite systems upon the ruins of those which preceded them, only to be pulled down in their turns, to make way for others equally absurd, and equally false. After dragging us through mazes of intricate reasoning, it leaves us precisely at the point at which it found us, all uncertainty, obscurity, and suspense. "The world by wisdom know not God." We appeal to facts—they are before you—and we confidently expect your decision upon their testimony.

It is here that Revelation takes up the process, and disperses the mist of uncertainty. It professes not in-

deed to *reason* upon subjects beyond the comprehension of the human mind; but it reveals the *fact* and requires our assent to it: which we may safely give, although we do not comprehend the whole of that which is revealed. Those parts which we *do* comprehend, we conceive to be true and wise: may we not reasonably conclude that those which we do *not* completely understand are equally so; and that the deficiency is in our natural powers, and not in the subject investigated? Those who call upon you to relinquish your Bibles, have not attempted to fathom the depths of futurity. They rather wish you to consider the scanty period of "three-score years and ten," the boundary of the hopes, the joys, and the expectations of man. They place beyond death—ANNIHILATION! The thought is insufferable! Say, you who have dropped the parting tear into the grave of those whom you loved,—is this a consoling system? Are the most tender connexions dissolved to be renewed no more? Must I resign my brother, my parent, my friend, my child—FOR EVER? What an awful import these words bear! Standing upon the grave of my family, must I say to its departed members,—“Farewell! ye who were once the partners of my joys and sorrows! I leaned upon you for support; I poured my tears into your bosom; I received from your hands the balm of sympathy—But it is no more! No more shall I receive your kindness; no more shall I behold you! The cold embrace of death clasps your mouldering bodies; and the shadows of an impenetrable midnight brood FOR EVER upon your sepulchres!”—No! We cannot relinquish Christianity for a system which conducts us to this fearful close! When skepticism shall have provided a substi-

itute for our present hopes, we will listen with more confidence to its proposals.

And yet the cry of modern philosophy is against the only pledge of immortality afforded the human race. Where is the *gratitude* of such conduct? Are we not indebted to it for all the illumination which we enjoy? Did Paganism disappear, till Christianity exerted her benign influence? Did not man in a state of nature demand and offer human victims? And did not Revelation stay the effusion of blood, and abolish these infamous rites? Is it not friendly to science and civilization? Is it not inimical to whatever is injurious to the interests of man? Where is the *wisdom* of such an opposition? Before you banish this, produce a better system: shew us "a more excellent way:" teach us morality more sublime! What is its *crime*? Sedition? Impossible! It "puts us in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work." Want of philanthropy? Surely not! Some may bear its name who do not breathe its spirit: but their bigotry and illiberality are not chargeable upon Christianity—Christianity, which teaches "to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men." It substitutes faith for good works; and its professed teachers set up opinion against morality? It is a gross calumny! It blends these nominally jarring principles: it assigns to each its proper place: it requires the influence, and commands the agency, both of the one and the other: it joins together those things which men frequently separate; and with equal consistency and plainness, traces the causes and effects of salvation: it has prescribed—"these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, be careful to maintain good works."

Extinguish the light afforded by this despised volume, and you are precisely in the situation of the heathen world. I close the Bible; and there remains to you a hope without a foundation, assaulted by a thousand dismal apprehensions. The planets which roll over your head, declare matchless wisdom, and incalculable immensity. They write in the heavens, the name of Deity; and the attributes of power, majesty, and immutability. But where is the record of pardon? It is neither written by the sun beam; nor wafted on the breeze. Where is the record of immortality? It is not inscribed on the face of the heavens; nor revealed by the operations of nature. "The depth saith, 'It is not in me!' and the sea saith, 'It is not in me!'" Look abroad into creation. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth; it is broader than the sea!"

From what has been advanced, we conclude, that the state of man, considered as destitute of a revelation of the mind and will of God, is truly deplorable. So convinced was Socrates of this, that, from the uncertain decisions of reason on the most important subjects, he not only concluded that such a divine revelation was necessary; but expressed his persuasion, that such a communication would be made.\*

If you admit the existence of a God, you must grant, that it is *possible* for him to give such a revelation. When it is so essential to the happiness of man, can we believe that a Being so infinitely gracious as

\* See note 4, at the end of the volume.

the Deity, would suffer us to remain without this source of consolation? If a revelation be necessary, it is *probable*; and if it be probable, where are we to expect it? In the mythology of the heathens? In the Koran? In the "Age of reason?" or in the Bible? Has there ever been a book produced, that has any pretensions to inspiration, this volume excepted? And are not *its* claims arising from external and internal evidences, irresistible? "We speak as to wise men, judge ye what we say!"

## LECTURE II.

### THE CREATION.

GEN. i, 1.

*In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth.*

SENSE, Reason, and Faith, may be considered as progressive steps, by which the mind ascends to the invisible God. Creation is an object of Sense. The light which shines upon my path is an emblem of the purity of Deity. The meridian sun is an image of *his* uncreated glory, who is the centre of every system. Whether I gaze upon the heavens, and trace the revolutions of orbs which move there: or follow the eccentric comet through its protracted sphere, so far as it is visible: or examine the insect that flits by me, or the blade of grass upon which I trample: I perceive the operations, and adore the wisdom of the Divinity. His voice speaks in the thunder-storm; and when his lightning bursts from the bosom of the dark cloud, “my flesh trembleth for fear of his judgments.” Fanned with the breath of the morning, or the gale of the evening: standing in this plain, or on that mountain: dwelling on the dry land, or floating on the surface of the deep—I am still with God.

Reason takes up the process where Sense fails. It deduces inferences respecting invisible things from those “which do appear.” Nature wafts the mind to the Creator. From its majesty, Reason argues his greatness: from its endless variety, his bounty; from its uses, his wisdom. The foundation of the Temple of Knowl-

edge is laid deep, wide, and lasting on the face of the universe. Reason seizes such materials as Sense can furnish and carries on the building. But, alas, the edifice remains incomplete! The architect is skilful; but the materials are scanty. Those which are most essential to crown the work, lie far from this country beyond the grave. In vain imagination lends her assistance, and attempts to explore the land of spirits, where only they are to be found. Bewildered, exhausted, and powerless, the artist sits down in silent despair.

Here faith takes up the tools which fell from the hand of Reason. Revelation ascertains all that futurity had concealed; and faith draws her materials from Revelation. The building rises and shall continue to rise, till "the top stone is brought forth with shouting." For "faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen."

Sense cannot introduce us to the invisible Majesty of heaven. It can only present us with his image. The pure, ethereal light—the blaze of a noontide sun—the azure heavens and revolving orbs—the mysterious, eccentric comet—the insect curiously wrought, and the grass simply elegant—the thunder-storm—the lightning vivid and irresistible—the morning and evening breeze—the verdant plain and the elevated mountain—the solid earth, and the rolling seas—these all reflect the glory of Deity, all bear the impress of his hand, all develope his wonderful agency—but they are not GOD HIMSELF.

Reason ascends a little higher; and from the volume of nature, through the medium of sense, unfolds a little of the divine nature, and a few of his perfections. His immensity, his wisdom, his liberality, may be inferred

from every thing which I behold: but, alas, I am still at a distance from God! What is he to *me*? What does he require? Have I disobeyed the dictates of reason at any time? or neglected to serve him? If so will he pardon sin? and how am I to receive forgiveness? Neither reason nor sense can answer these inquiries, nor silence the clamors of conscience.

It is faith rising on the wing of Revelation that introduces me into the heaven of heavens, unlocks the mystery, and unfolds the seven-sealed book. Here I read the covenant of mercy. Here I receive the promise of pardon. Here I learn all that I would know, and anticipate all that I shall hereafter enjoy. The pressure of the ills of life is lightened; and I "endure as seeing Him who is invisible."

Who can behold the fair structure of the heavens and the earth without feeling a powerful desire to understand their origin, and to be acquainted, in some measure at least, with the architect who reared them? Cold is the heart which kindles not into devotion, when the skies blaze with a thousand lamps; and grovelling the mind, which rises not through the system of the Universe to the Great First Cause! Blind is that understanding which cannot see, amid the vicissitudes of seasons, and the changing blessings of the Spring, the Summer, the Autumn, and the Winter, the superintendence of a faithful friend, and the bounty of an unwearied benefactor! Insensible is that man who can look upon this grand machinery, and live in the bosom of creation, yet perceive no harmony, no order, no loveliness, no design; or upon whom they make no impression! Let the friend of *my* choice be one who can relish the majesty of nature: who, on the close of the day, from the summit of some lofty mountain, will watch the

rising cloud, and observe the evening spread her gray and dusky mantle over the features of the landscape, till they are lost and extinguished: whose eye is fixed with delight on the stars as they break one by one through the increasing obscurity; and who withdrawing from the world, and penetrating the forest, can rejoice with the laughing scenes around him, and can relish retirement, nor envy the dissipation of life, as he hears its noise swelling on the gale of the evening. The Friend of God, and the Admirer of nature, is the man whom I would choose as my companion, and love as my own soul.

It is not possible for the spirit of man to be encircled with the present Deity, without inquiring after the fountain of existence. Every thing above us, around us, beneath us,—lives. Every clod of earth teems with animation. Every drop of water swarms with animalcules; imperceptible indeed to the naked eye, but plainly visible when the organ of vision receives assistance from art. Probably myriads floating in the air which we breathe, are drawn into the lungs in the act of respiration. Curiosity must stimulate our inquiries, even if we had no other, and no better motives: nor can we examine, without emotions of gratitude, a system in which every thing ministers either to our necessities or to our convenience.

In truth, men of all ages, and at every period of time, have been solicitous to understand their own origin and *that* of things around them. Every power of the mind has been exerted, and no pains has been spared, in attempting to unravel this mystery. The spirit has been overwhelmed with extravagant and clashing hypotheses: or the man has sat down contented with uncertain rumors, and mutilated tradi-

tions. The stream of his knowledge rose from the pure and undefiled fountain of Revelation; but it gathered pollution from the channels through which it passed, before he stooped to drink its defiled wave. The systems formed by Reason, and that suggested by Revelation, are each to pass in review; and when they are contrasted, we hope to prove, THAT THE MOSAIC ACCOUNT OF THE CREATION IS THE ONLY RATIONAL ONE WHICH WE HAVE RECEIVED.

The different hypotheses of men, who either had not received Revelation, or who have refused its testimony and denied its pretensions, may be reduced to one of these two divisions: either that the world was the production of chance, or that it is eternal. The several opinions of ancient and modern times, appear to be neither more nor less, than ramifications or modifications of the one or the other of these systems. We shall examine them separately.

#### I. THAT THE WORLD WAS PRODUCED BY CHANCE.

When we behold a complicated, yet harmonious and well-constructed machine, we may be ignorant of the hand that formed it, but we find no difficulty in assigning it a maker. No rational man would ever imagine that it was the production of chance: and if the idea were suggested to him, he would reject it with disdain as an insult to his reason. I gaze with delight upon a beautiful landscape-painting; color melts into color, and shade softens into shade. By the artful intermixture of light and of shadow, in some parts it dwindles into perspective; in others, it appears raised from the surface. Here, the figures seem to project from the canvass; and there the distant mountain bounding the horizon, just shews its diminished

elevation, scarcely distinguishable from the azure of the surrounding heavens. So exquisite is the combination of the various tints; that the instant I see it, I discover in it the hand of a master. Who in this assembly gazing upon a transparent orrery, to have a correct idea of the motions of the earth, and of the heavenly bodies, would suffer his imagination to rest for a moment on the supposition, that the machinery so admirably adapted to a certain definitive purpose, was constructed merely by accident, without design, without skill, and without a maker? And shall any man attempt to persuade you, that the solar system, of which it is but an imperfect resemblance, was formed, arranged, and regulated by chance? Let me see it produce the orrery, before I give it credit for the construction of the system! It is strange that men should so easily agree in assigning to inferior productions some adequate cause, yet deny it to superior operations: that they should with such facility discover the agency of man in all his works, and yet not discern the hand of God in the visible creation.

Plain sense, independent of laborious investigation, or superior intelligence, uncontaminated by corrupt principles, and unbiassed by inveterate prejudice, is sufficient to overthrow this absurd system. Let but the man of a common understanding look abroad into the economy of nature, and give in his evidence. Ask him, whether chance placed a boundary to the restless waves, and said "hitherto shall ye come, but no further?" or commanded the mountain to rise decked with verdure, and break the clouds as they passed? or clothed the valley with corn, and turned the course of the rivulet through it, to water the young plantation? or drew an atmosphere round this globe? or bade yonder worlds preserve

invariably the same orbit, during six thousand years, around the same luminary? Propose these questions to a mind of a common standard, accustomed to the exertion of its own powers, and unacquainted with the dispute between Revelation and Skepticism: and it is impossible that they should be answered in the affirmative. It would be less insane to conclude that the machine were self-constructed, and that chance disposed the several parts of the painting.

Those who demand the voice of reason on this subject shall be gratified by the testimony of a great man, to whom the light of Revelation never appeared. The mind of Cicero was too exalted to stoop to so degrading an hypothesis. He asks, "Can I forbear to wonder that there should ever be a man who could persuade himself, that this beautiful and well-finished world was produced by the fortuitous floating together of certain solid and indivisible bodies, necessarily moved by the force of their own gravity? I cannot imagine why he, who can thus conclude, should not also think, that if innumerable types (formed of gold or of any other substance, and representing the letters of the alphabet,) were cast carelessly upon the ground, they would form the annals of Ennius, so as to be perfectly intelligible: but I much doubt whether chance would be able to produce a single verse. How then can these men assert that atoms without color,\* without any of that quality which the Greeks call ποιοτήτης†, and without intelligence, floating together at random, should by accident form a perfect world; or rather,

\* The Epicureans imagined that color, heat, and similar qualities, belonged only to compound bodies; and that size and weight were the only properties of atoms; or roughness and smoothness, resulting from their configuration.

† Plastic.

an infinity of worlds, some of which are at every point of time produced, as others perish? But if this accidental concourse of atoms can make a world, why does it never form a portico, an house, a temple, a city, which might certainly be effected with much greater ease?"\*

Let us for a few moments select a part of the creation of God as a full answer to the absurd system under consideration, and as an indisputable evidence of infinite skill and of omnipotent agency. We are about to turn your reflections upon yourselves. Contemplate your own body: observe the union of its several parts, and their adaptation to the particular purposes for which they were designed. Mark the composition and configuration of the whole. What grace in movements! what beauty of countenance! what endless diversity of feature! what incomparable workmanship is perceptible in the whole frame! You discover bones, marvelously united, presenting a skeleton of the human form: fibres and nerves, fine and delicate in the extreme: muscles, possessing incredible strength, and singularly disposed: vessels, through which the stream of life flows, complicated, and branched into every part of the body: a spirit, at an unknown moment, and in an unsearchable manner, superadded to give impulse to the whole machine. In consequence of every volition of the mind, this and the other muscle is in motion: but no one can define the union between matter and spirit: and philosophy in vain attempts to lay her finger upon the spring which agitates the vibrations of ten thousand invisible fibres. The whole mass of blood is perpetually circulating through every channel, and return-

\* Cic. de nat. de or. ii, 37.



ing to the heart black and improper for the purposes of life, till it has undergone an instantaneous chemical change, which is effected in the lungs by the air, and it flows on purified to pursue its unwearied course. If the air inhaled be unsuitable to perform this process, and unable to effect this change, immediate death is the inevitable consequence. Air, which has lost its elasticity in mines and similar places, or which is impregnated with mortal particles, has this sudden and awful influence upon the human frame. Who, with the smallest pretensions to reason, can affirm or believe that such complex machinery is the production of chance? Galen, a celebrated heathen, was converted from atheism by contemplating an human skeleton, persuaded that workmanship so exquisite, and design so manifest, demonstrated the existence of a Creator. Yet is this human frame but a very small part of the divine agency. The same skill is visible in every, the meanest, insect, submitted to our inspection.

The Egyptians maintained the irrational system under consideration; and one should imagine that a more complete refutation could not be made, than their own statement of it. Diodorus Siculus has preserved it, and we submit it to your examination.

“At the commencement of all things, the elements of the heavens and the earth were blended, and they wore an uniform appearance. But afterwards these parts separated from each other, the world assumed the shape which we now behold, and the air received its perpetual motion. The fire ascended highest, because the lightness of its nature impelled it upwards; and for the same reason the sun and the stars move in an invariable circle. But that part which was gross and muddy, as also the fluid, sank down into one

place, by the force of gravity. These elements perpetually floating and rolling together, from their moisture produced the sea, while from their more solid particles sprang the earth, as yet extremely soft and miry. But in proportion as the light of the sun began to shine upon it, it became solid; and the surface of it fermented by the warmth extracting its moisture, swelled, and exuded putrescences, covered over with a kind of thin skins, such as may still be observed in marshy or boggy places, when, the earth having been cool, the air is heated suddenly, and not by a gradual change. These putrescences, formed after this manner from the moisture of the earth extracted by the warmth, by night were nourished from the clouds spread all around, and in the day were consolidated by the heat. At length when these embryos were arrived at their perfect growth, and the membranes by which they were enclosed were broken by the warmth, all sorts of living creatures instantly appeared. Those that had a larger proportion of heat in their natures, became birds and soared on high. Those that were of a gross and terrestrial kind, became reptiles and animals confined to the ground. While those who drew the most of their qualities from moisture, were gathered into an element corresponding with their natures, and became fish.”\*

It is scarcely possible to conceive of any thing more confused, inexplicable, and unphilosophical, than this hypothesis. Yet even in this account, deformed as it is by alterations, disguised by absurdity, and clouded with obscurity, something of the Mosaic system may be traced, which renders it probable that it might orig-

\* Diod. Sic. Lib. I.

inally have sprang from his representation of chaos. There is this essential difference: *he* makes order and beauty to arise out of confusion and deformity under the forming, superintending hand of Deity: *they* ascribe it all to the agency of chance. When I speak of the *Mosaic* hypothesis, I would be understood to prefix his name to the scriptural system, only because he committed to writing the tradition of the generations which preceded him up to the birth of time, and not to insinuate that he was the inventor of the account contained in the first chapter of Genesis.

On the present occasion, and in the discussion of the present subject, I trust that it will be deemed sufficient if I merely mention a more modern hypothesis. It remained for the philosophers of the eighteenth century to discover that the earth and the other planets were originally parts of the sun, struck off from that immense body by the concussion of comets, and whirled into infinite space, by the rapidity of their motion acquiring their spherical form, and assuming their present appearance. It may be thought that this account of the creation evinces the fertility of their imaginations; but it may also be questioned whether it will place the laurel upon their heads, as accurate reasoners, or as illumined and sound philosophers. Yet these are the men who arrogate to themselves the sole claim to reason, and who condemn as superstitious and irrational, all who, rejecting their crude and extravagant systems, adhere to the plain, concise, and luminous account, transmitted to us by Moses.

But it is time that we should pass on to the consideration of the remaining hypothesis, viz.

## II. THAT THE WORLD IS ETERNAL.

Many celebrated names among the ancients supported this opinion; of whom were Ocellus, Lucanus, Aristotle, the later Platonists, and Xenophanes, the founder of a sect called the Eleatic. Plato himself acknowledged that the world was created by the hand of God. It was more over supported by many modern philosophers; among whom we may number, Spinoza, Amalric, and Abelard; not to name those of our own day, some of whom hold the eternity of the world in its full sense; and others assign to it an antiquity much more remote than the scriptural account will allow. The heathen poets at large countenanced the former opinion, which proves that the popular sentiment of the Pagan world was, that what we deem creation, sprang from a chaos of which they appear to have no correct notion, under the influence of mere chance.\*

There are several modifications of the hypothesis of the world's eternity: but we feel it our duty to assign the reasons which appear to us to overthrow it rather than to state the several senses in which it was held.

1. A valuable writer† has laid it down as an axiom, that if any thing be eternal it is also self-existent and immutable. For a being is the same with all its properties taken together. We can have "no conception of any substance distinct from all the properties in which they inhere." On this principle, if any property be removed or destroyed, a *part* of that being would necessarily perish; which is inconsistent with its being

\* See note 2, at the end of the volume.

† Doddridge's Lectures, xxiv, Part II, page 47. Demonstration—connected with the preceding chain of propositions.

necessary, and subverts its eternity *as a whole*. It cannot be said, that it is impossible for alterations to be made on the face of this globe, when its several parts are incessantly changing; and the inference, allowing this fact, is against its eternity.

2. The same ingenious author has collected and enumerated at length,† several philosophical and astronomical objections against this system. These have been urged by various writers; and we shall be satisfied with simply naming them. They are founded upon those immutable laws of nature by which the several parts of this grand system act in unison, so far as they have been discovered, and are comprehensible to us, and which are acknowledged by the world at large. They are to this effect: That the projectile force of the planets is continually diminishing, therefore, had the present system of things been eternally the same, they would long since have fallen into the sun. That the sun itself is continually losing some of its light, however small the proportion may be; and of course must have been utterly extinguished. That as the sun and the fixed stars are supposed to attract each other, they must, ere this, have met in the centre of gravity common to the whole universe. That as many substances are constantly petrifying and ossifying, the whole earth must have undergone the same change. And that as hills are continually subsiding, the surface of the whole globe must, ages ago, have been reduced to a level: for if it be urged that the numbers of those so subsiding are counter-balanced by others which we may suppose to have been raised by earthquakes and other violent convulsions, we answer—that the numbers so raised

† See Doddridge's Lecture, Part II, page 47—50. Quarto edition.

must be small compared with those reduced: not to say, that mountains raised by earthquakes are for the most part hollow, and are therefore naturally more disposed to subside and fall in. This hypothesis supposes that all mountains with which we are now acquainted, are the effects of earthquakes, (admitting that the original ones, through the effects of time, had been levelled, which would doubtless have been the case had the world been eternal;) a supposition so absurd, that we need only appeal to such mountains as the Alps, the Peak of Teneriffe, and others, to overthrow it. Many others have been proposed, but we cheerfully leave these hypothetical speculations to the learned and the curious, the philosopher and the naturalist, and pass on to other considerations which we deem more important and more satisfactory.

3. We have no credible history of transactions more remote than six thousand years from the present time. The Chinese, the Egyptians, the Chaldeans, and the Phenicians, have all laid claim to much higher antiquity; but in bringing these pretensions to the test, it is clearly manifest that they do not deserve the credit which they demand. Their chronology is so absurdly extended, as to exceed the bounds of probability, and to excite suspicion in respect of the facts themselves, which are the subjects of their calculations. It has been stated, and rendered probable by the learned writers of the Universal History, in their account of the Tartars and the Chinese, that a great part of China was very thinly peopled so late as the year before Christ six hundred and thirty-seven, when the Scythians, under the conduct of Madyes, made an irruption into Upper Asia. We have a singular fact to state, which will prove that their boasted antiquity

really falls within the limits of the Mosaic chronology. For the evidence which we are about to produce, we are indebted to the discoveries of modern astronomy. The Chinese have ever made a point of inserting in their calendars remarkable eclipses, or conjunctions of the planets, together with the name of that emperor in whose reign they were observed. To these events they have also affixed *their own dates*. There is a very singular conjunction of the sun, moon, and several planets, recorded in their annals as having taken place almost at the very commencement of their remote history. The far-famed Cassini, to ascertain the fact, calculated back, and decisively proved, that such an extraordinary conjunction actually did take place at China, on February the twenty-sixth, two thousand and twelve years before Christ. This falls four hundred years after the flood, and a little after the birth of Abraham.\* Here are two important facts ascertained. The one is, that the Chinese *are* an ancient nation, although perhaps not at that time a very large one; and the other, that their pretensions to antiquity beyond that of Moses are unfounded: because this event, which they themselves represent as happening near the beginning of their immense calculations, falls far within the history and chronology of the scriptures.

The Egyptians pretended in like manner to possess an exact narration for some myriads of years. Their inaccuracy is demonstrable from a plain matter of fact.

\* May I be permitted to recommend a small and well composed treatise, called "*The Christian Officer's Panoply*," written by an excellent officer of marines now living, and personally known to me? It is published by Matthews. This singular fact is recorded in this little volume, which is the best compendium of evidences in favor of the Bible, and the most familiar I have ever seen. The style of writing adopted is at once entertaining and instructive; and I never received more of pleasure and of satisfaction, from any book which I ever perused.

They professed to preserve the records of other ancient nations as well as of their own; and their evident fallacy in relation to other empires, marks the dependance which we ought to place in their history respecting themselves; and proves that we should receive their calculations with great caution, and under considerable limitations. When Alexander entered with his victorious army into Egypt, the priests professed to shew him out of their sacred annals an account of the Macedonian and Persian empires through a period of eight thousand years: while it appears from the best historical accounts, that the Persian empire was not then three hundred years old: nor had the Macedonian been founded quite five centuries. In order to establish their chronology, they make their first kings, on their own calculations, reign above twelve hundred years each; and for the same reason the Assyrians make their monarchs reign above forty thousand years. We might adduce a variety of similar instances of unbounded license in the pretensions of the Chaldeans, Phenicians, and some other nations. But it is unnecessary to pursue the inquiry farther. Such extravagance defeats its own purposes; since no dependance can be placed upon calculations so chimerical.\*

4. We are able to ascertain the periods when the most useful arts and sciences were invented; which could not be done with certainty, had the world been eternal, because many of them would have been involved and buried in the mist of extreme antiquity. Mark the progress of science. Observe how soon it arrives at the perfection of which it is capable! What elucidation the revolution of a few ages throws upon theories

\* See Pearson on the Creed: page 58—60. Folio edition of 1669. Consult also Stillingfleet's *Origines Sacre*.

previously obscure! In the lapse of comparatively a very few years, the hand of time uncovers a fund of knowledge, which was veiled in perplexity and uncertainty. How many useful arts are invented, and how many interesting discoveries are made in the course of a single century! Calculate upon the most tardy progress of the arts imaginable, and determine whether those of which we are now in possession are at all equal to that which we might reasonably expect, if the world had been eternal, and if human genius and industry had been gradually, however slowly, penetrating the darkness, and dispersing the cloud of ignorance? If it be urged that floods, and fires, and wars, with ten thousand nameless hypothetical desolations, may have destroyed a multitude of useful inventions; we answer, that the number of these must have been prodigious indeed, and absolutely inconceivable, to produce a devastation of the arts which should be able to counterbalance the inventions of science, which, on the supposition of the world's eternity, might be expected. Nor could we with such facility determine the periods when these useful arts were discovered, if the chronology of the world really extended far beyond the Mosaic history. Admit that the world were twenty thousand years old: we should necessarily be in uncertainty with regard to the rise of the most simple and useful inventions, because of their extreme antiquity. The fact, on the contrary, is simply this: that the necessities and conveniences of life, civilization and commerce, the inventions of the arts and sciences, the letters which we use, the language which we speak, have all known originals, may all be traced back to their first authors, and these all fall far within the circle of six thousand years, while none are found to exceed it—no, not one.

5. In the same manner we are able to trace the origin of different nations; which we could not do with certainty had the world been eternal. We can look back to the beginning of the greatest empires of the present day; and we can also mark the rise, the meridian splendor, and the decline of those which preceded them, till we arrive at a certain point beyond which we know nothing; and this point extends to about the standard assigned in the Mosaic account of the creation. Should earthquakes and floods be again pleaded as having destroyed nations as well as sciences, and thus reduced the world to a second infancy—if any had remained, we might naturally conclude that the most useful arts had been preserved, and that some wrecks of mighty nations would have survived the desolation, at least, to tell the tale of woe to succeeding generations. But a system begins to be in danger, when those who maintain it are reduced to the necessity of supposing things which might, or might not, happen—where probabilities are against them—and when if their arguments are admitted, the slender causes they assign, are in themselves inadequate to the production of effects so extensive as they wish to establish.

6. It may be necessary to notice a modern objection which has been urged against the Mosaic chronology; and which is designed to prove, that if the world be not eternal, it may still claim a much higher antiquity than is allowed in the Bible. It is in substance as follows:\*

\* These objections to the Mosaic chronology are stated and refuted very much at large in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, article *Earth*. To the writer of this article I am indebted for the statement given above; and for the most part I have adhered to his language as best conveying his thoughts upon the subject.

"In pits or openings of ground in the neighborhood of Vesuvius and *Ætna*, beds of lava have been discovered at considerable depths below each other; and these in some places are covered with successive strata of vegetable mould. These different strata have proceeded, it is said, from an equal number of irruptions from the mountain. Ten or twelve successive strata, overlaid with soil, have been discovered in the bowels of the earth; and it is strongly asserted, that, by digging deeper, many more might be found. It is ASSUMED that *a thousand years at least* are necessary to the production of a soil sufficient for the nourishment and growth of vegetables upon these volcanic lavas. If this be granted, and *twelve* such strata have been discovered, the antiquity of the earth is immediately swelled to, at least, twelve thousand years: which is more than double the Mosaic chronology. This, then, is the point upon which the whole controversy turns; and the answers that have been given to this objection may be laid down in the following order:

1. It is granted, by those who have written upon this subject, that some lavas are very solid, and others much less so. The one, of course, resists the operations of time much longer than the other. This also is admitted.

2. They have not determined of which sort the lavas in question are, which is a material inquiry: since, if a thousand years were required for the more solid, a much less time would be necessary for the farinaceous.

3. Soil gradually increases by decayed vegetables, and the sediments of snows and rain: the thickness or thinness of the soil must therefore determine whether a greater or less time has been employed in the accu-

mulation: but these writers have not informed us of the dimensions of these subterraneous vegetable strata—another material circumstance in the calculation.

4. Volcanic ashes and muddy water are sometimes thrown out, designed, as it should seem, by nature to repair the sterility occasioned by the lava; and these ought to be taken into the account, as materially assisting quickness of vegetative soil.

5. They have, however, furnished us with the following fact. The town of Herculaneum was destroyed by an irruption in the ninety-seventh year of the Christian era. 'There are evident marks, that the matter of *six* irruptions,' say they, 'has taken its course over Herculaneum; for *each* of the six strata of lava is covered with *a vein of good soil*.' Here then, we have their own authority for *six* strata of good soil accumulated in less than seventeen hundred years: which, supposing them of equal thickness, instead of a *thousand* years, leaves us not *three hundred* for the production of each."

At best, then, this objection is hypothetical merely; and upon the testimony of the objectors, a thousand years are not only unnecessary to the production of such strata, but *six* of them have actually been formed in less than seventeen hundred years; or less than three hundred for each: and we therefore see no solid reason to induce us to sacrifice the chronology of Moses, to the uncertain doctrine of vegetable strata.

We produce only one other consideration against the opinion of the world's eternity; and that appears to us of very great importance:

6. If the world is eternal, how has the tradition of its beginning every where prevailed, although under different forms, among nations both barbarous and

civilized? We leave the skeptic who disputes the Mosaic history, and the philosopher who asserts the eternity of the world, to answer this inquiry—it is not *our* business. The fact cannot be denied. Not only is it to be found among the refined nations of antiquity, but barbarians who then chased, and savages who still pursue, the wild and brute inhabitants of their own inaccessible forests, had, and yet have, some tradition of the creation of all things. It is not merely in England's metropolis, that infidelity is encountered with the history of the beginning of the world; traditions of it are to be met with on the plains of Indostan, on the banks of the Ganges, and among every tribe and every nation, from the line of the equator to the circle of both the poles. It forms a part of every religion in the known world. Every country, although, perhaps, claiming an antiquity higher than we allow, and supposing the world to have been produced by chance, does nevertheless admit that it had a beginning. This was the universal doctrine of the heathen world; excepting that some of their philosophers, from the love of novelty, or the pride of distinction, disavowed the public sentiment. It was the common faith of all nations, and remains so. We appeal to the Phenician histories, to the Indians, and to the Egyptians. We read it in Linus, in Hesiod, in Orpheus, in Aratus, in Thales, and in a variety of Greek writers too large to lay before you; all of whom embrace the idea that the world was created, and not eternal. From these, the Romans borrowed the same doctrines. Ovid, who closely transcribed these opinions from the Greeks, has given a long and eloquent description of the formation of the heavens, and the earth, and its several inhab-

itants.\* We repeat our question, how was it possible for the tradition of a beginning to the world, to be so universally prevalent, and so universally received, through every age, if it were indeed eternal?

From these representations we now wish to deduce a most interesting and important inference; and to establish a truth which lies at the foundation of all religion, natural and revealed—

#### THE BEING OF A GOD.

If we have in any respect succeeded in overturning the two hypotheses which have now passed under review: if the world be not the production of chance, and if it be not eternal; it follows, that it must have been created—in order to which there must have been an infinite Architect. We have seen human reason led into labyrinths, from which it could not be extricated but by the friendly assistance of Revelation. To the eye of nature, all is obscurity. We have received decisive evidences from notorious facts, that when an investigation of these subjects has been attempted by men of the first talents, independently of this infallible guide, the mortifying and inevitable result has been, bewildered systems, trembling uncertainty, clashing, contradictory theories. “There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture’s eye hath not seen: the lion’s whelps have not trodden it, nor hath the fierce lion passed by it.” These secret paths are the operations of God, sought out by those who love him, and discovered only by the direction of his word, and the agency of his Spirit. Admit the being of a God, and all is clear and luminous. Every difficulty vanishes: for what cannot Omnipotence perform?

\* Metam, Lib. 1. See the quotation, note 4, at the end of the Volume.

“The fool hath said in his heart there is no God.” Can he deserve a milder name who holds his irrational creed? All nature proclaims his existence; and every feeling of the heart is responsive to its voice. The instant we begin to breathe, our connexion with God is commenced, and it is a connexion which cannot be dissolved for ever. All other unions are formed for a season only: time will waste them: death will destroy them: but this connexion looks death in the face, defies the injuries of time, and is commensurate with the ages of eternity. The moment we are capable of distinguishing between good and evil, our responsibility to God is begun—it commences with the dawn of reason, it looks forward to the judgment seat as its issue. At every period, and under every circumstance of human life, man still draws his existence from the “Fountain of life:” he may be cut off from society, but cannot be separated from God: he may renounce his fellow men, but never can burst the bonds of obligation by which he is held to his Maker, till he shall have acquired the power to extinguish that immaterial principle within him, which can never be subjected to decay or to dissolution. The last sigh which rends the bursting heart, terminates the correspondence between man and man; but strengthens the union between God and man. All the springs of enjoyment and of existence, are hidden in the Deity, and the fates of the human race are suspended in the balances sustained by his unshaken arm. It is an object of the first magnitude, to learn something of the Being, with whom we stand thus intimately and inseparably connected: who is light and warmth in the sun, softness in the breeze, power in the tempest, and the principle which pervades and animates, which regulates and sustains universal nature: but to deny his ex-

istence, is the madness of desperation, and the temerity of presumption: of all insanity, it is the worst; and of all ingratitude, it is the deepest. I see him rolling the planets in their orbits, controlling the furious elements, and stretching an irresistible sceptre over all things created. I see the globe suspended, and trembling in his presence; and the kingdoms of this world, absorbed in his empire, rising to distinction, or falling into irrecoverable desolation, according to the counsel of his will. My heart is not at ease. I am instructed, but not tranquillized. The infinity of God overwhelms me: his majesty swallows me up: his inflexible justice and purity fill me with dismay: his power makes me afraid. It is this volume which first brings me acquainted with him as God, and afterwards as a friend: which represents him at once the Creator and Redeemer of the human race; and while his attributes command my admiration, his mercy forbids my terror.

#### THE MOSAIC ACCOUNT OF THE CREATION

remains to be briefly examined. He conducts us at once to this great Architect: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." He represents the earth, after its creation, as a dark fluid, and an unformed chaos, or mass of matter, which in six days God reduced to order, and disposed in its present form. "And the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." A modern critic\* has translated this passage, "*a vehement wind* oversweeping the surface of the waters." He founds his criticism upon the circumstance that the Hebrew

\* Dr. Geddes.

language calls "thunder the voice of God; a great wind his breath; the clouds his habitation, his chariot; the lightnings and winds his ministers and messengers, &c." and the possibility of rendering the words רוח אלהים either *the spirit of God*, or *the wind of God*, which he translates, *a mighty wind*. He produces various quotations from the scriptures, in which רוח must be rendered *wind*, and accumulates much criticism to prove that this is the primary sense of the original word, and of the terms usually employed in translating it. An equal number of passages might easily be extracted from the sacred writers, in which רוח would bear no other translation than *spirit*. Neither is it quite clear that רוח signifies spirit only in a secondary and metaphorical sense: since by their arrangement of explanatory terms, lexicographers seem divided upon the subject.† Respecting אלהים there can be but one opinion; and while our translators have preserved the literal rendering of the words, the translation proposed is confessedly justified only on its resemblance to some Hebrew phrases, the correspondence of which may or may not be admitted. This premised, I object further to the rendering "a vehement wind," because a very beautiful idea suggested by the literal reading of the words is lost in that, adopted by this critic: an idea which is so well expressed by our inimitable poet,‡ who was himself well versed in the original language of the Sacred Scriptures; and who in his beautiful address to the Holy Spirit, says,

† Parkhurst gives, as its primary sense, *air in motion*; which corresponds with Dr. Geddes's opinion: yet in his translation of Gen. i, 2, Parkhurst renders the words "*the spirit of the Aleim*:" Stockius gives, as the primary sense, *spiritus*, then *ventus*, &c. How little can be inferred from verbal criticism!

‡ Milton.

"Thou from the first  
Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread,  
*Dove-like, satst brooding on the vast abyss,*  
*And madst it pregnant."*

But it was impossible to maintain the simple translation, without admitting a doctrine, which this critic could not reconcile with the religious principles which he had adopted, the personality of the Holy Spirit;† and he therefore substituted one which did not clash with his sentiments: and on the same principle I prefer the common reading of our Bibles, because it accords with a system which appears to me both rational and scriptural, and which does include the personality of this divine Agent; and because the words are by our translators literally rendered.

The first thing which appeared was *light*; the separation of which from darkness, was the work of the *first day*. "And God said, let there be light; and there was light." A more simple and more literal translation is, "Be light; and light was." This very passage, in its connexion, has been marked by the elegant Longinus, as a specimen of the *true sublime*.‡ Nor did it escape the observation of the psalmist, who has well expressed it. "He spake, and it was done: he commanded, and it stood fast."

On the *second day*, God made an *expansion*: for so the Hebrew word רָקִיעַ which our translators have rendered "firmament," implies. It is derived from a root which signifies "outstretching," and corresponds with that beautiful passage in Isaiah xl, 22. "It is he

† Dr. Geddes has said, "those who have found in this passage the *person* of the HOLY GHOST, have been very little versed in the language of the East: and paid very little attention to the construction of the text." So easy is it to deal in bold and unqualified assertions, and call them critical remarks. Surely he forgot that Milton was an Hebrew scholar of no common standard.

‡ See note 5, at the end of the volume.

that *stretcheth out* the heavens as a curtain, and *spreadeth them out* as a tent to dwell in." It is the atmosphere which surrounds our globe, and which possesses density sufficient to sustain the waters above it. Its design said Moses, is, "to divide the waters that are above this firmament"—or atmosphere, "from the waters that are under this expansion." This atmosphere is perpetually drawing up particles of water, till they accumulate, and become too heavy for the air to sustain them, and fall in showers of rain.

On the *third day*, the earth was drained, and the waters which before triumphed over its surface, were gathered into one grand receptacle. The land appeared, dry and fit for vegetation—received the name "Earth"—and produced, at the Divine command, herbs, plants, trees, and all the endless varieties of the vegetable world, bearing their several seeds and fruits, according to their different kinds. The congregated waters he called "seas;" and drawing boundaries around them, he said "Hitherto shall ye come, but no farther; and here shall your proud waves be stayed."

On the *fourth day*, the sun and moon were formed, and placed in the heavens to illuminate the earth, to distinguish between day and night; to divide, and to rule the revolving seasons of the year. "He made the stars also."

On the *fifth day*, were created fishes, and the swarming, multiform inhabitants of the hoary deep, the fowls of heaven, and whatsoever flieth in the expansion above us: these all were produced from the waters.

On the *sixth day*, were formed all terrestrial animals. Then also MAN, his last, best work, was "fashioned" from the "dust of the earth," and animated

with "a living soul." Of man he formed the WOMAN, "to be an help meet for him."

"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them." And "God rested from his work, and blessed the *seventh day*, and sanctified it," as a sabbath to the man and to his posterity.

Such is the Mosaic account of the creation, leading us up to God as the Creator and Disposer of all things; affording, beyond controversy, the most *rational* of the hypotheses presented to you; and while it has left the way open for philosophic inquiries, it has not said any thing to gratify vain curiosity. We will attend to some few questions which have been often suggested from this representation of the beginning of all things, and conclude this Lecture, which has already been drawn out to a great length.

1. What was the light that made its appearance before the creation of the sun? In considering this question, which cannot be solved, and which is a matter of opinion altogether, various conjectures have been formed. Some have called it *elemental fire*. Some have supposed that it resembled the *shekinah*. A similar representation of it is made by our immortal bard:

"'Let there be light,' said God, and forthwith light  
Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,  
Sprung from the deep, and from her native cast  
To journey through the airy gloom began,  
Spher'd in a radiant cloud, for yet the sun  
Was not; she in a cloudy tabernacle  
Sojourn'd the while.'"

The critic, to whom we have before referred, supposes it to have been "an emanation of the same sun that still enlightens us; and which, although it had not yet appeared in its full glory, yet shed sufficient

light through the dense atmosphere, to make the surface of the terraqueous globe visible.”† But as I feel inclined to give implicit credit to the Mosaic account, in its literal signification, which affirms that the sun and moon were made on the *fourth* day, and that “God commanded the light to shine out of darkness” on the *first*, I should rather imagine it to be the same particles of light *diffused*, which were afterwards *collected* into one body—the sun.‡ But of these various opinions the reader will judge for himself.

2. Does the Mosaic account oppose the present system of astronomy?

The language of the scriptures expresses simply the *appearance* of things, and neither sanctions nor opposes any system of philosophy. It has left the road of knowledge and research perfectly open; and neither forbids, nor adopts, the hypotheses of those who have explored the heavens, and with laborious and useful skill, developed the laws by which the great system, of which this globe constitutes a part, seems to be regulated. When in common language we say—“the sun rises, and sets”—we do not mean to oppose the Newtonian, or any other astronomical system, but merely to express the *apparent* motion of this grand luminary. It is the beauty of the scriptures, that their language is perfectly conformable to our ideas, and therefore on most subjects falls within the grasp of our comprehension. And we ought to recollect that the design of this volume is not to develop the laws of nature, but to lead us along the narrow path which

† Dr Geddes’ Crit. Rem. on Gen. c. i. ver. 3, vol. I. p. 14; quarto.

‡ I do not profess to offer this hypothesis as clear of objection and difficulty; but it is the best which occurs to me, and is allowable where every thing must be merely hypothetical. I am happy to hear that this thought corresponds with one suggested in Mr. Fuller’s commentary on Genesis, just published; which, however, I have not yet had an opportunity of consulting.

conducts to heaven; not to guide our feet through the orbits of planets, but to direct them to the throne of the invisible God.

3. Does the Mosaic account of the creation extend to the universe at large? This is an inquiry which cannot be decided. Some have concluded that the earth, the sun, and the moon, only belong to this history. Others restrict it to the solar system. Others extend it to the wide universe. The circumstances of the creation, as related by Moses, apply principally to the globe which we inhabit. The sun and the moon are mentioned as formed at the same period, and are evidently included in the account, because of their connexion with, and advantage to the earth. But the phrase, "He made the stars also"—seems to advert to the great universe; and may lead us to presume, that the creation of all things was effected at one and the same time.

4. In what sense are we to understand the term "six days"—as literal, or as allegorical? A critic,\* whom we have had occasion to mention more than once, boldly pronounces it "a beautiful mythos, or philosophical fiction."—Some of the ancient Christian Fathers esteemed it allegorical. I confess, however, that my reverence for this volume, makes me very reluctant to resolve into *allegory*, any thing which wears the appearance of a *fact* on its pages; much more so, to venture to call it a *fable*. The following reasons determine me in concluding, that Moses designed it as a statement of facts, and that we ought to understand the phrase, "six days," in its literal sense:

The *seventh* day was instituted as a Sabbath, that in it the man might rest from his labor, and more immediately serve his gracious Creator; and the reason,

\* Dr. Geddes.

the only reason, assigned for it in the promulgation of the law was, that “in *six days* the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is; wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it.”

This is the reason always produced, when the institution of the Sabbath is at all named; and in consequence of it, the *seventh* day was observed, till the resurrection of Christ on the *first* day of the week: when, in perpetual remembrance of this great and glorious event, the *first* day became the Christian sabbath, and the *seventh* was laid aside.

The apostle who wrote to the Hebrews, quotes this passage from Genesis, in the second chapter, and at the fourth verse, of his epistle:—“And God did rest the *seventh* day from all his works.” In his reasoning upon this passage, he makes no one remark, which discovers the least approximation to an allegorical interpretation; much less did he seem to regard it as “a beautiful mythos:” on the contrary, every thing which he says throughout that chapter, appears to ascertain very clearly, that he understood the phrase, “six days” used by Moses, in its literal sense.

5. Can any reason be assigned for the number of days fixed upon, and occupied in this great work? Certainly not. We dare not attempt to fathom the divine designs; nor is the Deity to be judged at a human tribunal. Perhaps (for what can be offered but conjecture?) he carried on his work in progression, and chose six days for the performance of that, which he could have effected, had he been so disposed, in an instant, to shew that he is a “God of order and not of confusion.” It is thus also, that he works in providence, and in grace. His plans are gradually developed; his wisdom gradually manifested; his will gradually

accomplished; his designs gradually completed. And possibly he chose *only* six days; to demonstrate his unbounded power, that could perform so immense a work in so short a space of time.

6. How could Moses be fitted to give an account of the creation? There can be no difficulty in answering this question, if it be allowed that he was *divinely inspired*: but we may account for his ability to record the circumstances of the creation in a way which will be more satisfactory to the wavering. It is no improbable conjecture, that in the earliest ages of the world, God communicated his will to pious individuals, and permitted them to transmit it to others by oral tradition: for in those days the longevity of man favored this mode of conveyance. It will be admitted, that Adam, could not be ignorant of the circumstances of the creation. With Adam, Methuselah lived two hundred and forty-three years: with Methuselah, Shem the son of Noah, lived about ninety-seven years; and with Shem, Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, lived fifty years, according to the chronology of the history of Genesis. On this calculation, no more than *three* persons, Methuselah, Shem, and Jacob, were necessary to transmit this account, together with the knowledge and worship of God, from Adam to the time when the children of Israel went down into Egypt, through a period of two thousand two hundred and thirty-eight years. It is easy to conceive how it came into the hand of Moses: for his grandfather, Amram, lived a considerable time, both with Joseph, the son of Jacob, and with the Jewish lawgiver, the writer of this history, himself. When the life of man was shortened, and the nations had become corrupt through idolatry, oral tradition was no longer a safe vehicle or convey-

ance; and God therefore communicated a revelation of his mind and will, which was committed to writing.

In retracing the outline of the preceding Lecture; and contrasting the scriptural relation of the beginning of all things with other hypotheses; I trust, that the proposition, announced for elucidation this day, has been established: **THAT THE MOSAIC ACCOUNT OF THE CREATION, IS THE ONLY RATIONAL ONE WHICH WE HAVE RECEIVED.**

“Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth; wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

## LECTURE III.

### THE DELUGE.

GEN. VII, 11—24.

*In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights. In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem. and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them into the ark: They, and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort. And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life. And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the Lord shut him in. And the flood was forty days upon the earth and the waters increased, and bare up the ark; and it was lift up above the earth. And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth: and the ark went upon the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth: and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits*

*upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died, that moved upon the earth, both of fowl and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man. All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed upon the earth, an hundred and fifty days.*

2 PET. III, 5—7.

*For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water. Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men.*

IT is impossible to read the history of empires which once gave laws to the world, to trace the sources of their gradual decay, and to contemplate them in ruins, without emotions of pity and regret. The man who visits the spot where ancient imperial Rome stood, and held through many successive ages a boundless dominion over the commotions of the world, and finds only the sad monuments of decayed greatness, must possess feelings peculiar to himself, if no melancholy sensations arise in his heart to accord with the desolations

without. Where her awful senate convened, time strides over the ruin, and writes on the broken triumphal arch, "The glory is departed." The traveller, as he sits upon a prostrate pillar, hears no sound but the passing wind, as it sighs along the weed-encompassed portico of some mouldering temple. The amphitheatre, once crowded with the masters of the globe, now shelters the bat, and the serpent; and affords an asylum to the owl from the glare of noonday. Who, that has an heart to feel, can wander among the crumbling vestiges of ancient grandeur, without dropping a tear over the scene of desolation, and exclaiming, "So sets the sun of earthly majesty, to rise no more for ever?"

But the destruction which now demands our attention, is of much wider extent, and of infinitely greater magnitude. Not a city, nor an empire, but a world in ruins, is the subject of contemplation. A new and awful view of Deity is conveyed to the mind. We behold him, not descending in mercy wafted on the wings of angels, amid the full chorus of heaven, to spread his golden compasses over the vast abyss, and to describe the circle of the earth; calling universal nature from discord and chaos; lending radiance to the sun, and immensity to the spheres; impressing his image upon man; constituting him lord of the creation; placing the diadem of glory upon his head, and the sceptre of authority in his hand: but we contemplate the offended Majesty of Heaven, arrayed in vengeance; terrible in fury; clothed in all the thunder of his power; arming the elements against his adversaries; and opening the dreadful artillery of his wrath upon a guilty world.

When God completed the creation, he beheld in the harmony and magnificence of his work, the perfect transcript of his own vast design, and pronounced the

whole, and all its several parts, "very good." By an early act of disobedience, man broke the law of his Maker; and not only cancelled the bond of his own happiness, but blotted the hand-writing of Deity in the volume of nature. The fall of man, *as a point of doctrine*, comes not within the department of this course of Lectures: it is our business simply to insist upon it as *a fact* recorded in the Scriptures, which ten thousand different and fatal effects produced by it, tend to establish. To this fact, as a source, must be traced up every calamity which wrings a tear from the eye, every pang which extorts a groan from the heart, and every stroke of mortality which descends upon our connexions. Sin having found its way into the world, was followed by death and a long train of attendant miseries. The yawning tomb presented itself to the man at the end of this valley of tears, and the grave was the termination of his fondest hopes: to the earliest race of men, as to us, it was the limit to the longest period of existence. A life of "nine hundred sixty and nine years," like a summer's day, had its dawn, its morning, its meridian, its decline: it yielded to the lengthening shadows of the evening; and gradually sunk into the gloom of a midnight silent and impenetrable.

Who will be able to set boundaries to vice? When the floodgates are once opened, who shall presume to check the torrent, or attempt to stay the impetuosity of the rushing waters? The rivulet, increased in its course by the constant accession of innumerable, tributary streams, swells into a flood, and rolls a deep, silent, resistless river, which is at length lost in the bosom of the ocean. Such was the progression of iniquity. Small in its beginning; it rapidly augmented, till it had covered the whole earth. Man added sin to

sin, till the measure of his transgression was full, and the long-slumbering wrath of heaven burst over his unsheltered head. He who can think lightly of sin, and wantonly or deliberately walk in the paths of temptation, resembles a man who suffers his little bark to approach the circumference of a whirl-pool: at first the vessel glides on in gentle, wide, and almost imperceptible, circumvolutions: continually, however, approaching the centre, and bearing the wretch thither with increased velocity, till in defiance of effort, the violence of the current prevails, and all is ingulfed in the illimitable abyss.

Before the subject, which is to occupy our present attention, is considered at large, the intermediate history, which demands elucidation, ought to pass in review before us. One of the most extraordinary circumstances, attending the antediluvian history, is the astonishing duration of human life in those days, contrasted with the brevity of our own. Some have conjectured, that the years ascribed to these first men, were lunar, and not solar. To consider them as months, would release us from one difficulty, but it must involve us in another still more considerable. Among other objections, the following may be deemed unanswerable: First, this calculation reduces their lives to a shorter period than our own: Secondly, some of them must have been fathers under, or about, six years of age: Thirdly, it contracts the interval between the creation and the deluge, to considerably less than two hundred years even admitting the larger calculation of the Septuagint.\*

\* The common calculation settles the date of the flood at 1656 years after the creation; but the Septuagint places it in the year of the world 2262.

The account of this longevity, however, is not restricted to the Mosaic history: but is corroborated by various ancient writers. Upon this subject, Josephus enumerates the testimonies of Manetho, Berosus, Mochus, Hestæus, Jerome the Egyptian; the writers of the Phenician antiquities, Hesiod, Hecataeus; Hellanicus, Acusilaus, Ephorus, and Nicholas, who generally agreed that "the ancients lived a *thousand* years."\*

We have accumulated these names to shew, that these men either were in possession of traditions relating to this fact, upon which their assertions are founded; or that they borrowed them from Moses: and in either case our purpose is answered. For if they received them from prevalent traditions, it will be granted that these traditions had originally some foundation in fact; and they correspond with the sacred history. But if they borrowed them from Moses, two points are gained on our part. It is proved, on this principle, that such a man as Moses did really exist; that his writings were then extant; that they were in substance what they now are; and that they bear an antiquity more remote than these, which are allowed to be the most ancient of the heathen writers. It is proved further, that his history was highly esteemed; and that it was supposed, by these writers, to contain facts. Whether they drew from Moses, or from tradition; and whether their testimony sprang from his narration, or from any other source; either way, the Mosaic account of these early ages, is corroborated by the oldest fragments of antiquity.

Various inquiries have been agitated respecting the principles on which we may reasonably account for

\* See note 1, at the end of the volume.

this longevity; and it will be readily granted that the answers attempted are founded upon opinion only. Some have imputed it to the temperance of the antediluvians, and their simplicity of diet. Others have imagined that it arose from the superior excellence of their fruits, or some peculiar salubrity in the herbs of those days. A third class of philosophers have stated, that it proceeded from the strength of their *stamina*, or first principles of bodily constitution; that they had an organization more vigorous, and a frame more robust. This has been admitted, by some, to be a concurrent, but not a sole and adequate cause: since Shem, who was born before the flood, and, it is to be presumed, had therefore all the strength of an antediluvian constitution, fell short of the age of his fathers three hundred years. In addition, therefore, to natural bodily energy, it is probable that there was a temperature of the air; and an adaptation of the general state of the earth, to the production of this extraordinary longevity, which temperature was destroyed by the Deluge. But there is no way of completely answering such inquiries, but by referring immediately to the will and power of Him, who is "wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working."

Moses relates also an union which took place between the family of Seth and the descendants of Cain: for so we interpret the phrase, "Sons of God," and "daughters of men." It is generally believed that the sons of Seth had, till that time, preserved the worship of God, with correspondent purity of life, while it is agreed that the posterity of Cain were given over to "vile affections;" and on this supposition the fitness of the terms used, and the propriety of their application to the respective parties, will not be disputed. This

fatal union totally destroyed the principles of holiness which a part of the human race had preserved from extinction; and when from this commerce sprang "mighty men," and "men of renown," "the" whole "earth was" quickly "filled with violence." "There were," also, "giants in the earth in those days." We understand the term literally, as implying, not merely men of violence, but of extraordinary bulk and stature. And why should this account be disputed, when confirmed by so many ancient writers? Pausanias, Philostratus, Pliny, and others, speak decidedly of the remains of gigantic bodies discovered in their days.\* "Upon the rending of a mountain in Crete, by an earthquake," says this last mentioned natural historian, "there was found standing upright a gigantic body." Josephus speaks of bones seen in his days, of a magnitude that almost exceeded credibility. Even Homer, who wrote three thousand years ago, speaks, from tradition, that, in his "degenerate days," the human frame was dwindled down into half its size. It is not necessary to contend, nor is it intimated in the Mosaic account, that the bodies of men in general were of such prodigious dimensions: all that we wish to prove is, that "there *were* giants in those days;" that there were, probably, *many* of them; and that this scriptural relation is abundantly confirmed by profane historians.

At this time, fraud and injustice, rapine and violence, according to the sacred writer, extended themselves over the face of the earth. Is he singular in this declaration? Who that has read the records of antiquity, may

\* See Doddridge's Lectures, Part vi, Prop. cix. &c. p. 293. §5, 4to. edit. Grotius de Verit. Relig. Christ. §xvi. notes. Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. v. c. 16. Consult also Dr. Geddes' Criticism on Gen. vi, in which he espouses an opposite opinion from that stated above: but, as it appears to the writer of these Lectures, one, which reflects less credit upon the veracity of Moses, as an historian; and destroys his claim to inspiration.

not gather a confirmation of his statement, from their deposition? Who that is conversant with the fables of the heathen poets, may not extract this truth from the cumbrous mass of fiction by which it is overwhelmed. A golden age gradually degenerating into an iron one, has been sung by a thousand bards, whose silent harps have long since mouldered away with the ashes of their masters! Which of the ancient poets, did not celebrate these times? or deplore their extinction? Catullus\* has stated this fact nearly in the terms used by Moses; and has amplified his expressions so largely, as to present almost a commentary upon the sixth chapter of Genesis. Ovid† tells the same tale; and represents his injured justice driven from men by the hand of rapacity, and seeking shelter in her native heavens.

Amidst this general depravity, was issued a solemn declaration from heaven; "My spirit shall not always strive with man." Yet was not sudden and silent destruction, commissioned to destroy the guilty. The patience and pity of God, were manifested even in his rising indignation. Enoch and Noah were "preachers of righteousness;" and a space of one hundred and twenty years was allotted to the offenders for repentance. Enoch, in the mean time, was received into heaven "without tasting of death;" and Noah having closed his unavailing ministry, entered into the ark, constructed according to the pattern given by God himself with his family, and the pairs of all living animals. For the world—they "were eating and

\* In his Epithalamium of Peleus and Thetis: see note 2, at the end of the volume.

† *Victa jacet pietas; et virgo cæde madentes  
Ultima cœlestum terras Astrea reliquit.*

*Ovid's Meta. l.*

Faith flies! and piety in exile mourns;  
And justice, here oppress'd, to heav'n returns!

Josephus alludes, Berosus adds, "It is reported that part of the ship now remains in Armenia, on the Gordyæan mountains;\* and that some bring thence pitch, which they use as a charm."†

Lucian speaks of a very remote history of the ark, laid up in Hierapolis of Syria; and the account which, according to him, the Greeks gave of the deluge is as follows: "That the first race of men were self-willed, perpetrating many crimes, regardless of oaths, inhospitable, uncharitable: for which cause, great calamities fell upon them. For suddenly the earth threw out much water: a deluge of rain fell from heaven: rivers overflowed exceedingly; and the sea itself overspread the globe to that degree, that all things were overwhelmed by the water, and the whole of mankind perished. Deucalion alone remained, the source of another generation, on account of his prudence and piety. He was preserved thus: In a great ark, which he had prepared, he placed his wives, and his children, and entered also himself. After them went in bears, and horses, and lions, and serpents, and all other living creatures upon the face of the earth, by pairs. He received all these animals, which had no power to injure him, but were extremely familiar, being overruled by Divine influence. These all floated together, in the same ark, so long as the waters were upon the earth."‡

We have already remarked, that the same person was intended by a diversity of names; and Grotius says, that "Seisithrus, Ogyges, and Deucalion, are all

\*Same as Moses calls Ararath. See Grotius de Verit. Relig. Christ, § 16 notes.

†Josephus contr. Appion, primo; et Antiq. His. lib. i. cap. 4.

‡Lucian, libro de Dea Syria, et de templo vetustissimo quod erat Hierapoli.

names signifying, in other languages, the same as Noah does in the Hebrew, the language in which Moses wrote.”† Now it is a fact well known, that the ancient writers, in copying from any original, did not give in their translation the names used in that original: but changed them for some other that had *the same meaning* in the language into which they translated them, as the original names had in that, from which they transcribed. For instance, Alexander the historian, writing concerning Isaac in Greek, does not adhere to the original name, but calls him Gelota (Γέλωτα) or “Laughter:” which is the interpretation of the Hebrew name Isaac; and was given him by Sarah in remembrance of some circumstances relating to his birth. Thus, by the different names used in the accounts which different nations give of the deluge, the same person is intended—and *that* person is Noah. Diodorus says, it is the tradition of the Egyptians, that “Deucalion’s was the universal deluge.” Plato corroborates this testimony by saying, “that a certain Egyptian priest, related to Solon, out of their sacred books, the history of the universal deluge; which took place long before the partial inundations known to the Grecians.” There is another remarkable coincidence and correspondence with the Mosaic account: the very day fixed by Moses as the beginning of the deluge, agrees exactly with the day in which, Plutarch tells us, Osiris went into the ark, the seventeenth of Athyr; which is the second month after the autumnal equinox, the sun then passing through Scorpio.—It is thus that the evidence of the universal deluge, in this particular branch of it, corresponds with

†Grotius de Verit. Relig. Christ. § 15—*notes*: where also these extracts from Lucian and others, are quoted at length, with many similar ones.

that of the creation: that it is equally the subject of tradition; and *that* tradition, varying a little in circumstance, is equally prevalent over the face of the whole earth. This fact is farther proved by,

2. THE EXISTENCE OF VAST QUANTITIES OF MARINE PRODUCTIONS UPON THE TOPS OF MOUNTAINS, AND UNDER THE SURFACE OF THE GROUND, TO CONSIDERABLE DEPTHS, OVER THE WHOLE EARTH, AND AT ALL DISTANCES FROM THE SEA.—The earthquake that shakes the towering palace, and the proud battlements of the city to the ground, rends the bosom of the earth, and discloses the shells and teeth of fish—the bones of animals—entire or partial vegetables—evidently transported thither from their respective elements, by some grand and universal commotion, affecting at one and the same time, the sea and the dry land, and destroying the limits of their mutual separation. This was considered as a decisive argument till the recent hypotheses of some modern philosophers have furnished an *evasion* of its force.† It has been proved that volcanoes are capable of forming mountains of very considerable magnitude: that the fire of them lies deep, and often below the waters of the ocean itself. On this account, marine substances may be found at all depths in these volcanic mountains, and yet afford no proof of a deluge. There would be some weight in this argument if these marine substances were found only in the neighborhood of volcanoes: but with all its plausibility, it is incapable of universal application. It may be thought to account for marine substances lying deep in volcanic mountains, or lands stretching along the borders of the ocean, and liable to volcanic irruptions: but it will furnish no sat-

† Sir William Hamilton.

isfactory reason for their existence in an inland country, free from volcanoes, and hundreds of miles distant from the sea. There are also appearances of desolation presented in nature, which cannot be accounted for, even on the supposition of earthquakes; nor be deemed the consequence of any convulsion, less powerful than that of an universal deluge.

Another hypothesis is levelled against the system which we espouse. Some philosophers have supposed, that a perfect transposition of the order of things has taken place: that what is land *was* once sea; and that where the ocean rolls his proud waves, the earth presented her fair and cultivated face.\* If this, indeed, was the case, as the sea is liable to the same volcanic irruptions, the existence of marine productions, on every part of the globe, may be accounted for, without the admission of an universal deluge: since we may easily imagine, that when the waters retreated, they left some of their spoils, deeply implanted, behind. The observations which we have made, and are capable of making, in the contracted sphere of our personal knowledge—and the changes which are effected on the face of nature, in the narrow circle of the few years allotted to us—may not perhaps be deemed any thing: but those of ages and generations long since rolled by, and which are recorded on the faithful page of impartial history, ought to be duly appreciated. The inroads which the sea has made upon the land, recorded by those who have measured and watched its boundaries, in the remembrance of our fathers, have been comparatively inconsiderable: nor will any authentic history of the most remote periods, furnish us with matters of fact to justify, or even to countenance, an hypothesis

\* Buffon.

so extravagant. Every instance which can be produced of the ground gained by the waves upon the shores of the globe, is so trifling, and the conquest was so slowly acquired, that the system proposed must suppose an antiquity of the world, very little different, as it respects the objections that lie against it, from the hypothesis which maintains its eternity; the answer to which fell under the department of the preceding Lecture. This wild opinion, moreover, seems to suppose islands only the tops of mountains: but over the whole face of our present continents is there no such mountain, or chain of mountains, in shape or extent, as our native country—whose hoary cliffs stretch their barriers wide and firm, frowning defiance equally upon the waves which assault her shores, and the power of nations who insult her majesty? On the whole, we think, that only on the principle of an universal deluge can the existence of marine productions found scattered wide, and buried deep, over the whole globe, be accounted for: since the theory which supposes the retreat of the ocean from our present earth, and that which rather suggests, than asserts, that all dry land was thrown up from the bottom of the sea, by volcanic, subterraneous fires, are equally preposterous and irrational. Now, the waters were long enough upon the earth, according to the Mosaic account, for shell-fish to breed on land, and to increase from spawn to their full size; the action of the waters upon the earth would greatly soften it; and the spoils of the deep, at, and before, the retreat of the waters, would be deeply absorbed, and covered by the perforated and broken soil. There appears to us to be but one way of determining upon this point: the Mosaic history is so express, that either an universal deluge must be admitted, or the

whole narration rejected. Had the deluge been only partial, some winged animals might have made their escape from it, since it gradually and progressively extended; and time was consequently afforded them for flight from the encroaching waters: but it is said, "all flesh died, that moved upon the earth, both of fowl and of cattle." And if the waters were restricted to only a portion of the earth, a constant miraculous power must have been exerted to keep them at an elevation so immense, as to cover all the high hills of the immersed part, from running off into the sea, supposing the sea to have preserved its usual level. Nor is it easily ascertained, how far the human race had spread themselves over the face of the earth, or the degree in which man had multiplied. When, therefore, we speak of the Deluge, we mean an universal flood; and mean to distinguish it from the partial inundations which from time to time have laid waste particular countries; and which, in more remote ages, were preserved in remembrance by the heathen poets.

II. We pass on to present you with a selection of a few, from the innumerable HYPOTHESES BY WHICH INGENIOUS WRITERS HAVE ATTEMPTED TO ACCOUNT FOR IT.

To all who have written upon this subject, the grand difficulty appears to have been, the prodigious quantity of waters requisite to such a deluge as that described by Moses. There are two sources whence the sacred historian deduces them: "the fountains of the great deep were broken up; and the windows of heaven were opened." The proportion of water necessary to

constitute an universal deluge, has been by some estimated at *eight* oceans; while others\* have computed it at not less than *twenty-two*. The inquiry then is, What did Moses intend by "the fountains of the deep?" and are these united with "the windows of heaven," sufficient to cause an inundation so immense?

1. Dr. BURNETT† supposes the world to have been perfectly round, without mountains or any irregularity of surface, incrusting a globe of waters, which he calls the central abyss. He imagines that this exterior covering of earth, was broken at the time of the deluge, and sunk down beneath the prevailing waters. This system, it is necessary to observe, opposes the narrative of Moses, which asserts, that "all the *high hills* were covered."

2. Mr. WHISTON‡ imputes the whole to the interposition and agency of a comet: descending in the plane of the ecliptic towards the sun, and passing just before the earth on the first day of the deluge. He also concludes that there is an abyss of waters under the surface of the earth; and supposes the influence of this body would produce a strong tide on the waters both above and under the earth, which would increase in proportion to the nearness of its approach. Those, particularly, encircled within the globe, would form an elliptical figure so much larger than their former spherical one, that, unable to oppose a resistance equal to its pressure, the surface of the earth would burst; which he asserts is the meaning of the phrase, "the fountains of the great deep were broken up." He further supposes, that, in its descent, the comet involv-

\* Dr. Keil.

† Telluris Theoria Sacra.

‡ New Theory of the Earth: also, the cause of the deluge demonstrated.

ed the earth in its atmosphere and tail for a considerable time; and the quantity of water left behind, when rarified by the sun, would descend in violent rains; which he imagines is intended by the opening of "the windows of heaven." The succeeding heavy rains, recorded by Moses, enduring an hundred and fifty days, he attributes to a second similar immersion, on its return. In withdrawing these destructive waters from the face of the ruined world, he supposes a vehement wind to have arisen, which dried up a part, forced more through the clefts out of which they issued, and deposited the remainder in the bed of the ocean; which he imagines not to have existed before. The uncertainty of every calculation respecting comets, and the possibility that their tails and atmospheres are streams of electric fluid, and not aqueous vapors, render this ingenious theory very questionable.

3. M. DE LA PRYME,\* concludes that the antediluvian world resembled the present one: but that the deluge was effected by violent earthquakes, breaking up its whole surface—absorbing continents, islands, and the whole of the then dry land, correspondent portions of earth emerging from the antediluvian sea. Three objections rise against this theory: 1. The Mosaic history says nothing of earthquakes. 2. Amid commotions so terrible as those which must necessarily be caused by the sinking of the earth, the ark itself could not have been preserved without miracle. 3. Earthquakes operate suddenly and violently: but the Bible affirms that the flood came on gradually, although irresistibly.

4. The eloquent and ingenious ST. PIERRE,† imagines that the deluge may be accounted for on the sup-

\* See *Encyclopedia Britannica*—article *Deluge*.

† *Etudes de la Nature*. Tome I., Etude IV.

position, that on the year in which this great event took place, the action of the vertical sun, was not confined to that portion of the globe, which is contained between the tropics, but was carried over the accumulated mountains of ice, at the northern and southern poles: which extraordinary circumstance, he thinks easily and naturally explained, by supposing that the earth, instead of preserving the parallel position of its poles, presented each of them, alternately, to the sun's verticle beams.

It seems impossible to form any hypothesis free from difficulty: and each of those stated, bearing a greater or less degree of probability, supposes, what in fact every theory must allow, an immediate interposition of divine power and agency. Admit only the fact, that HE who made the world, destroyed it by water; and he could be at no loss for means to accomplish his awful design. The quantity of water required is immense: but not impossible to be raised.\* Who has descended to his central storehouse? or seen the magazine of his rain and hail, treasured up against the day of wrath? Who can affirm that God has not a sufficient quantity of water *in* the earth for this grand purpose? It has been proved, that no less than *one thousand six hundred gallons* of water have been exhaled from *one acre* of land, and dispersed into the air, in *twelve* of the hottest *hours* of a summer's day, and when there had been no rain for above a month, and the earth was parched by continual heat!"\* Besides, the sacred writer is consistent with himself. He represents the earth originally covered, in its unformed state, with water, till the voice of God said, "Let the

\* See note 6, to this Lecture at the end of the volume.

† See note 7, at the end of the volume.

waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.”† If this theory be just, then is the deluge effected only by reducing the earth to its primeval state, and giving it over again to the dominion of the waters.

Admit only, from the reasoning of the first part of this Lecture, the fact of a deluge; and from the second, the hand of Omnipotence in the production of it; and there can be no difficulty which does not melt away under his resistless operations. Had there been no deluge, it were difficult to account for the universal traditions respecting it: still more so, to explain the appearances presented in the face of nature itself. It was impossible for Moses to impose the belief of it upon the Jews, appealing as he did to the names found in the line of their immediate ancestors, and fixing a certain era for this wonderful event. Many of them were well acquainted with the contemporaries of Joseph: Joseph with the particulars of the life of Abraham: and Abraham lived in the days of the sons of Noah. Now the Jews must have received traditional accounts of every remarkable event, handed down through successive generations, in other channels besides the writings of Moses. Had his history clashed with these traditions, they could not have failed to observe it; and had he attempted to impose a fable upon them, they could not have failed to detect it. And such a detection at the commencement of his history, could not have failed to weaken, in the minds of his contemporaries especially, the authority and validity of the whole.

But we must notice

\* Gen. i, 9.

### III. SOME OBJECTIONS, RAISED AGAINST THIS ACCOUNT.

OBJECTION 1, is raised against THE ARK ITSELF. many have supposed it too small for the purposes assigned to it. We might have presumed, had not Moses informed us, that a vessel so constructed, so designed, and so employed, could not have sprang from mere human contrivance. The length of it was three hundred cubits; the breadth, fifty; the height, thirty. The difficulty is to determine what was the exact measure of this cubit. Some fearing that the ark would not be sufficiently capacious for its destination, if measured by the common cubit, have enlarged its dimensions to extravagance. It is generally agreed, however, that they were common cubits: one of which, although formerly estimated at eighteen of our inches, is now allowed to contain twenty-two. According to this measurement, the ark must have been, in length 547  $\frac{2}{10}$  English feet; in breadth, 91  $\frac{2}{10}$ ; in height, 54  $\frac{2}{10}$ ; and its solid contents amount to over 2,730,781: almost double what it would be by the former computation. The form of it was an oblong square, with a flat bottom, and a sloped roof, raised a cubit in the middle. It had neither sails, nor rudder; and was admirably adapted to float steadily on the water, without rolling, which might have endangered the lives of the animals: but it was unfit to endure a boisterous sea. It consisted of *three* stories: each of which might be about eighteen feet high; and was partitioned into numerous apartments. It was, without doubt, so formed, as to admit a proper proportion of light, and air, on the sides; although the particular construction of the windows, is not mentioned. The whole seems to have had another covering, be-

sides the roof; probably made of skins, like that of the tabernacle. Noah is said, after the flood, to have removed the "covering of the ark;" which cannot be supposed to be the roof, but something drawn over it, like the covering of the tabernacle; which is also expressed by the same Hebrew word; and such a covering was probably used to defend the windows.\* Upon this estimate, the ark appears to be sufficiently large and commodious, for the purposes for which it was constructed.

OBJECTION 2, arises from THE DIFFICULTY OF ACCOUNTING FOR THE PEOPLING OF AMERICA; AND FROM THE SUPPOSED IMPOSSIBILITY OF WILD CREATURES OF ALL KINDS EXISTING IN ONE PLACE. With regard to the latter of these difficulties, it is removed, if we suppose, what is at least probable, that there might be such a temperature of air before the deluge, as was suited to the constitution of every animal. Respecting the difficulty of peopling America, it is neither impossible nor improbable, after the pattern afforded them in the ark, that some sort of a vessel or flotilla should be constructed, which would be sufficiently strong to convey them, by a north-east passage, to their destination. The greater difficulty is, the existence of wild creatures, and mischievous animals: which men neither would, nor could transport; unless some restraint had been laid upon their ferocity, similar to that which existed while they remained in the ark. But the modern geographical discoveries have removed the weight of this objection. The straits which divide North America from Tartary, are so narrow, as to admit a very easy passage from one

\* This account and calculation is principally extracted from *Angl. Univ. Hist.* vol. i, c. 7—*on the Deluge.*

continent to the other; and it is not impossible that they might even have been united by an isthmus which time and the waves, in their combined influence, have demolished.\*

OBJECTION 3, has been urged against THE DESTRUCTION OF INFANTS AMONG THE INHABITANTS OF THE OLD WORLD. We shall not attempt to develop the reason why the Almighty permits devastation among children: but we will venture to affirm, that this is no objection against the Deluge itself, as a fact, any more than against the existence of earthquakes, which equally bury infants in their ruins. There is an equal propriety in urging it against the one fact, as the other; and if it will not be admitted as an objection in the one instance, neither ought it to be pressed as a difficulty in the other. Those who oppose the fact on this ground, affirm that it is "contrary to the justice of God." We contend, with a learned writer†, that "they have no right, in fairness of reasoning, to urge any *apparent* deviation from moral justice, as an argument against *revealed* religion; when they do not urge an *equally* apparent deviation from it as an argument against *natural* religion. They reject the former, and admit the latter, without considering, that, as to their objection, "they must stand or fall together;" because the apparent deviation is the same in both cases.

OBJECTION 4, respects THE RAINBOW. The reasoning adopted is as follows: The same causes must always produce the same effects; consequently it is an absurdity in the Mosaic relation, to speak of the rainbow, as formed after the flood, and as the sign of a

\* The reader may consult on this subject, Dodd. Lect. pt. vi. §8, under prop. cxix. p. 350, 351, 4to edit.

† Bishop Watson, in his excellent *Apology for the Bible*.

covenant then made. We grant that the rainbow is a phenomenon necessarily resulting from the nature of light, and the form and situation of falling rain: yet this objection may be answered two ways;

1. Some have supposed that the earth, like the garden of Eden, was watered before the Deluge, not by rain, but by mist; in which case, no rainbow could exist.

2. The account of Moses does *not* directly assert, that the rainbow was then first formed; but merely that God appealed to it as a seal to his covenant, "I *do* set my bow in the clouds; and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth."\* The language may, without constraint, be understood to imply, that the rainbow *did* exist before: but that *now*, for the first time, it is appealed to, and appointed, as the seal of a covenant.

We shall detain your attention farther, only while we attempt,

#### IV. TO IMPROVE THE SUBJECT.

How can we better succeed in this great object, than by pressing upon your consideration, the solemn event which the apostle, in the words read at the commencement of this Lecture, has connected with it? "The heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word, are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men."

Carry forwards, therefore, your attention, and your thoughts, to this "great and terrible day of the Lord." You are interested in it; and it is inseparable from the subject which you have been contemplating. Are men insensible of its approach? So were they of the threatening destruction hovering over the days of No-

\* Genesis ix, 13.

ah; till one boundless scene of ruin opened upon their distracted sight, and swept them at once from life and hope for ever! Are those derided, who patiently wait the accomplishment of the divine promise, and expect the revelation of the Lord from heaven? It is no new thing. The world have ever been blind to their best interests; have ever sported with their own ruin. When Noah laid the first beams of his ark across each other, it is probable he did it amid the insulting shouts of an hardened multitude. The building advanced. Some admired the structure: some derided his plan: some charged him with enthusiasm, or with insanity: more were lost in sensuality; and all united in the desperate resolution, to bury his admonitions in the grave of oblivion. Still he entreated: still they spurned his instructions: still the edifice rose day after day: still the voice of gaiety was echoed on every side. With strange infatuation, they stopped their ears; and refused to "listen to the voice of the charmer," who solicited them with unwearied perseverance, and reasoned "so wisely." The roof is at length covered in. The danger becomes every hour more imminent. He presses his warnings upon them with increased energy: but, pointing to the unclouded sky, they laugh him to scorn, and load his ministration with contempt. It is closed! The last exhortation has been given; and he has wiped the last tear of insulted tenderness from his cheek. Ye blind, insensible mortals! what charm has "holden your eyes," that ye cannot see? Discern ye not the cloud that gathers over yonder mountain? The brute creation see it; and hasten for shelter to the ark. The family of Noah close the procession; they have entered their refuge; and even now "the door is shut!"—Oh! it is too late! Fraught with heavy indig-

nation, the tempest lowers fearfully. Every "face gathers blackness." Yet scarcely is it perceived, before a new scene of ruin presents itself. Ah! there is no escaping the hand of God! The skies pour an unabating torrent. An hollow groan is heard through universal nature, deploring the impending destruction. The birds and beasts which remain, excluded from the ark, scream and howl in the woods, whither they had fled for shelter. The sea assaults the shore: the restriction of heaven is removed: it passes its ancient boundaries: its triumphs already over the plains, and gains upon the hills. The ark floats upon its bosom. The despairing multitude fasten upon it an eye of distraction: they implore in vain the assistance of the prophet whom they had despised, and whose pitying eyes are again suffused with unavailing tears. He can bear it no longer. He retires to the innermost recesses of his vessel. In the phrenzy of despair, parents clasp their children to their cold bosoms, and flee to the highest mountains. Where else could they resort for shelter? for the boundless sea saps the foundation of the firmest edifices. What is their desperation as the waves approach the summit! It is equally impossible to descend, to rise higher, or to escape. They have prolonged a miserable existence, a few hours, only to sink at last!—It is all in vain! "The waters prevail exceedingly: every high hill is covered; and fifteen cubits" over their loftiest summits, the flood rises in haughty triumph!

Do you turn pale at this sad relation? Ah! weep not for these, "but weep for yourselves!" Do you blame their blindness and infatuation? Behold, the finger of conscience points to you; and its voice pronounces of you individually, "Thou art the man!"

Are there not "scoffers in these last days, walking after their lusts and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." Oh! this is wilful ignorance—this is incorrigible obstinacy! The great event, discussed this night, stands upon firm evidence; and it is the pledge of that second desolation to which we ought to be looking forwards. Are there not triflers with the long suffering of God; who presume upon his patience, and his mercy; and slumber in the arms of thoughtless sensuality? Let these remember, that judgment procrastinated, is not indignation removed: that the storm, rising slowly, accumulates more strength and fury than a sudden, transient blast. "The day of the Lord will come"—will come "as a thief in the night!" Man, retiring weary from the labors of the day, and slumbering under the mantle of darkness, shall be scared from his sleep, "to sleep no more," by the roar of a thousand thunders, and the crash of dissolving worlds! Darkness shall reign at intervals, for the last time: and death shall lay down his sceptre for ever! Shaking off the fetters of sleep and of mortality, the man looks around him with an inquiring, distracted eye. Great God! what scenes of despair, and of ruin, present themselves! What language shall describe the horror of that day, in the contemplation of which, imagination fails? Kings, starting from their couch of down, or bursting from their tombs of marble, shall reluctantly resign the sceptres of their burning empires! With what unutterable dismay will they gaze upon the globe itself, as it rolls along infinite space, blasted, and consuming by the lightnings of heaven!

Oh! it is no fable! we urge upon you no idle imagination! Already the day approaches—it is even “nigh at hand”—“the judge standeth at the door!” The archangel is preparing to blow that blast, which shall “shake terribly” not only the earth, “but also heaven!” The glorified saints are looking forwards with “earnest expectation” to that day; and the spirits of the slaughtered redeemed cry, from under the altar, “How long, O Lord, how long!” All things are hastening to be placed under the feet of the Savior. “And then cometh the end”—the last, great day—the day that shall disclose

“A God in grandeur—and a world on fire!”

## LECTURE IV.

THE DESTRUCTION OF BABEL, THE CONFUSION OF LANGUAGE, THE DISPERSION OF THE PEOPLE, AND THE ORIGIN OF NATIONS.

GEN. XI. 1—9.

*And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel, because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.*

## OBADIAH 3 &amp; 4.

*The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD.*

WE left Noah floating, with his family, upon the bosom of an overwhelming deluge, which had exhausted the fountains of the deep, to wash away the stains of guilt from the surface of the earth. We are now to accompany this favored family, from the ark that preserved them, to the wasted, deserted plains, once more visible. What an interesting picture, does the sacred historian present, to the eye of the imagination! Behold, an altar erected—a family surrounding it—the rainbow extending its sublime arch across the face of heaven—and the Eternal himself appealing to it, as the seal of a gracious covenant, and a pledge of security to the human race! On the one hand, may be seen the ark on the elevation of Mount Ararath: on the other, strewn thick and sad, the mournful remains of those who had perished by the waters. All is silent—while the patriarch adores his omnipotent Preserver; and presents his sacrifice, with the mingled emotions of pity, of gratitude, and of faith.

—OF PITY. Could he view the scene of desolation around him, without suffering one tear of compassion to fall? Impossible! And well might a patriarch's bosom entertain this divine and generous principle, when she takes up her residence, a welcome guest, in heaven! She throws her softest tints over

those blissful regions, without impairing either their beauty or their tranquillity; and sheds her sweetest balm upon their inhabitants, without destroying either their happiness or their repose. Her lily is interwoven with the roses which form celestial garlands; and her drops of compassion mingle with the tears of exquisite delight, which glitter in immortal eyes. She takes up her lasting abode in the bosom of the Son of God. She conducted the Savior through every trying scene which he witnessed in his passage through this valley of tears. "He wept with those that wept;" and "in all our afflictions he was afflicted." She accompanied him every step of his journey; and placed her chaplet of cypress upon his conquering head, when he expired on Calvary. In proportion as we possess the spirit of Jesus, we shall become the companions of pity. She will teach us to bind up the broken heart: to wipe away the tear from the eye of sorrow, and to pour the oil and the wine of sympathy, into the wounded bosom. O Religion! how have thy adversaries slandered thee, when they represent thee, as hardening the heart! Christianity instructs us to "love our enemies:" teaches those to weep, who never wept before; softens the obdurate spirit; melts down the ferocious disposition; controls the furious passions; quickens the sensibilities of nature; transforms the instruments of cruelty, into implements of husbandry; becomes the strongest, and most permanent, bond of society; and, in every point of view, meliorates the condition of humanity.

—Of GRATITUDE. As the patriarch had seen, with sorrow, the destruction of the world, he was preserved, in mercy, to behold the renovation of it. His consecrated ark had floated safely, during the prevalence of

the waters; and now, that they were abated, he descended from it, upon the face of nature, smiling, as a bride newly adorned. He received from HIM, who is the Sovereign Disposer of all events, a promise, that the serene sky should lower no more to destroy; and that the hand that balanced the poles of heaven, should roll the seasons round in their order. "I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood." "While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease." With the distinction which had been made between himself and his family, and the whole human race, in a moment of punishment so signal, fresh in his memory; and with these words of mercy sounding in his ears; surely, he could not but kneel before his altar with gratitude. It is gratitude which tunes the harps of heaven, and touches them with the finger of harmony. And when gratitude was extinguished in the bosoms of "a third part" of the sons of God, the order of heaven was deranged, the harmony of heaven was suspended, the symphonies of heaven were silenced, war first reared his hideous form, hell first received existence, and angels became demons. Nor can this sacred principle be annihilated in any bosom, excepting those over which Satan holds undivided empire. It could not, therefore, be excluded the heart of Noah.

—Of FAITH. There extended the seal of the covenant over the retiring cloud. "He believed; and it was counted to him for righteousness." He saw the fidelity of God, sparkling in the brilliant colors, formed by the rays of the sun, falling upon the descending shower. And did he not look forwards to HIM, who

should finally remove the curse, "plant a rainbow round about the throne," and "make all things new?" Surely, HE, from whom a new world was to spring, was not suffered to remain ignorant of the Redeemer of fallen man! He remembered the promise, that "the 'Seed' of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent;" and his sacrifice ascended with acceptance, because he beheld in the type, with the eye of faith, Jesus, the great antitype.

Did Noah find acceptance in raising an altar to God, and in collecting his family around it? Every good man may avail himself of the same privilege, enjoy the same intercourse, and find the same acceptance. Every *Christian* family will have an altar consecrated to the Deity; before which, they will esteem it their duty, their privilege, and their happiness, to bow; and around which, they will assemble, to present their morning and evening sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving. Permit me to press the question. Fathers of families! have *you* a family-altar? Do you stately, and constantly, bring your children, and your household, to a throne of grace, and present them before God? Do you mingle your praise, and your supplications, as the morning pours a flood of light upon your habitation, and the evening stretches her shadows over it? No "flaming sword, turning every way," guards from access, the throne of God: no darkness, and thunder, forbid your near approach. A voice, from the most excellent glory, proclaims, "Draw near, with boldness, to the throne of grace; that ye may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." To this invitation, is added a command:—"for all these things, I *will* be entreated." And woe to the man, who lives in the habitual neglect of this command, and

keeps his household back from God: for he will "pour out his fury upon the nations that worship him not, and upon the families that call not upon his name!"

Noah having built an altar, and gratefully surrounded it with his family, received the divine blessing on himself and his household. Permission was granted to man, for the first time, to eat, not only the produce of the ground, but flesh also. Then also, was impressed upon the brute creation, that fear of him, which the revolution of thousands of years has not been able to efface. "And the fear of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered." To this hour, there are few among the beasts of prey which roam the forest, that will not avoid the sight of even an unarmed man: unless driven to desperation by hunger, or provoked to madness by pursuit. The noble, majestic lion, loses his native fierceness, in proportion as he dwells near human habitations. The horse, the ox, the elephant, unconscious of their strength, are easily disciplined, and freely lend their powers, to serve their more feeble master. And this impress of God, this fear of man, remains undiminished to the present moment. Upon this occasion, also, the first denunciation against murder was issued. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." This solemn institution was confirmed, ratified, and enforced in the laws of Moses: and it has ever formed a fundamental law, in all civilized, and well-regulated states.

We have long dwelt with pleasure upon Noah's piety: we are now to unveil his weakness. The char-

acters portrayed in this volume are not perfect characters: otherwise they would not be men; neither would the history of their pilgrimage afford any solace to us in this vale of desertion and misery. For, alas! every day too sadly evinces that *we* are imperfect characters; every day discloses to our astonished eyes, some new trait of ingratitude, of disobedience, of sloth, and of depravity. It would be no consolation to us, to be informed, that God is now preserving their "eyes from tears," and their "feet from falling," for ever. "Ah, that may well be true"—would be our answer—"for their faith was always in lively exercise: their hope was never shaken: their zeal always burned with inextinguishable purity: their love never waxed cold. No difficulties impeded them: no enemies vanquished them: no dangers affrighted them: no considerations deterred them from running, with holy alacrity, the race that was set before them. *'Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and HE, that sitteth on the throne, shall dwell among them.'* But *we* are ever ready to turn aside. At best, we advance, 'faint, yet pursuing.' With wavering hopes, and a trembling faith; with languishing affections, and perplexing fear; we hardly reach forwards to our home; and are incessantly apprehensive, lest we should eventually fall short of it!" But what, if we should prove to you, that these were characters imperfect as yourselves? Many spots soiled their white raiment, while they walked through this world: many blemishes stain their memory. Yet "are they before the throne of God," for your encouragement; and as monuments of HIS mercy, whose grace shall finally make you more than conquerors over your corruptions, and your enemies. In the

mean time, observe, that as they were subject to your imperfections, they also, while upon earth, participated your chastisements, and were exposed to similar calamities with yourselves.—Behold, then, this great man, this good man, overtaken by the sin of drunkenness! On this occasion, one of his sons forgot that filial sympathy which should cover a parent's imperfections, and which warmed the bosom of his brethren: in consequence of which, Ham drew down upon himself, and upon his family, his father's curse; while a blessing, soft as the dew, descended upon the heads of Shem and of Japheth, and upon their posterity.

At length, we arrive at that eventful period, which is the winding up of the longest history: "all the days of Noah, were nine hundred and fifty years—and *he died!*" Six hundred years of his life were passed upon the face of the old world; and three hundred and fifty, he walked upon the ground of the new one. Three hundred and sixty-five days, had he floated upon the surface of a boundless ocean: rescued with his family from destruction; and bearing with him this testimony, "that he pleased God." This, it was, that encircled his hoary head with a diadem of glory: he was "found in the way of righteousness." The longest life is but as "yesterday, when it is passed:" but "Noah walked with God"—with that Being, whose days are commensurate with the ages of eternity; and who first provided for him, and afterwards bestowed upon him, an unfading inheritance.

When the sacred writer had conducted the venerable patriarch to his last, peaceful retreat—the grave; he favors us with a genealogy of his descendants. As his history particularly concerned the Israelites, he has given us the line of Shem *entire*; and *his only*.

As to the offspring of the other sons of Noah, his design appears to have been, merely to bring them down to the dispersion of the people; in order to leave to posterity the names of the first founders of nations; and then to dismiss them. Hence, although he mentions the Canaanites, as a people with whom the Israelites were concerned, yet he deduces the genealogy of Ham no farther; and it is shorter than those of Cush and Mizraim, by *one* generation.

The predictions of Noah were remarkably fulfilled: but to unfold the various events in correspondence with them, were, of itself, the labor of a lecture; and indeed belongs to the department of scriptural prophecy. He had said, "Cursed be Canaan,\* a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren." This was fulfilled in the reduction of the Canaanites, the immediate descendants of Canaan, by the Israelites, the posterity of Shem. It was again fulfilled, in the subjugation of the Egyptians, the descendants of Ham; both by the Persians, the posterity of Shem; and by the Grecians, the offspring of Japheth. Tyre was built by the Sidonians, the descendants of Ham; and was twice subdued, and at length wholly desolated, by the posterity of his brethren. The Carthaginians were descendants of Ham: the Romans, who subdued them, derived their line from Japheth. The whole continent of Africa, was peopled, for the most part, by the children of Ham: it is become the mart of the whole world for slavery; and the Europeans, the oppressors of this wretched people, are the posterity of Japheth. The blessing pronounced upon Shem, was, "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem:" or rather, "Blessed of the

\*It is a singularity in this prophecy, that Ham was cursed in the name of his youngest son, Canaan.

Lord my God, *be* Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant." Shem was peculiarly blessed in *two* respects: the Church of God was among the posterity of Shem, for many generations; and from him, "according to the flesh," the Messiah came.—Of Japheth, he said, "God shall enlarge Japheth." All Europe; the lesser Asia; Media; a part of Armenia; Iberia; Albania; the wide regions of the North, once in the hands of the Scythians, now inhabited by the Tartars; India and China; and, *probably*, the continent of America; are the possessions of Japheth. Farther, "He shall dwell in the tents of Shem." This seems to allude to the unions, which sometimes took place, between the posterity of these brethren, when they conjointly fought against the descendants of Ham. There have been some exceptions, when the descendants of Ham have subdued those of Shem, and of Japheth; but, in general, Ham has been the servant of his brethren: and it is worthy of remark, that the four grand empires of the world, the Assyrian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman, descended, the two former from Shem, and the two latter from Japheth.\*

We are afterwards introduced to Nimrod, who is called "a mighty hunter before the Lord." Commentators have been greatly divided respecting this extraordinary personage: since, the words of Moses may be taken in a good or a bad sense. There is nothing in his short history, bearing the least reproach; except, indeed, his name, which signifies *a rebel*. Enough, however, is said to render it evident that he grasped at empire; and obtained it. Some ascribe to him the project of building Babel; which, considering

\*See Newton on the Prophecies; vol. i, Dissertation 1. *Noah's Prophecy*.

his enterprising disposition, so far as we can judge of it, from the short narrative of the sacred writer, is not improbable: Others say, that he left the country, because he would not consent to the scheme; which, for the reason we have assigned, we do not think at all likely. And not a few conclude, that he was, at that period, very young.

Having passed over the link of history which connects the deluge with the present subject of discussion; we hasten to the immediate object of our meeting at this time: to consider the fact—THE DESTRUCTION OF BABEL; connected with THE CONFUSION OF LANGUAGE; and THE DISPERSION OF THE PEOPLE; and thence to trace, THE ORIGIN OF NATIONS. We shall aim simply, To illustrate and establish this event; and to deduce from it some considerations adapted to our individual improvement. We shall attempt,

#### I. TO ILLUSTRATE, AND TO ESTABLISH, THE EVENT.

In order to which, it will be necessary to consider the several parts of the history, as recorded by Moses; to produce the testimony of other ancient writers; and to answer some inquiries which may arise from the subject. We shall consider,

##### 1. THE SEVERAL PARTS OF THE HISTORY, AS RECORDED BY MOSES.

V. 1. "*And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.*" Speech is the vehicle of communication, by which one man transmits his thoughts to another: nor shall we burden your attention in tracing its origin; an inquiry which, we think, would lead us up to God himself. We take it for granted, without wasting the time in frivolous discussion, according to

the literal meaning of the express words of Moses, that "the whole earth *was* of *one* language, and of *one* speech." But it may be expected, that something should be said, respecting the primitive tongue—this universal language spoken by our fathers, before the confusion of speech. In addition to those languages, which are commonly known by the title Oriental, the Armenian, the Celtic, the Coptic, the Greek, the Teutonic, and the Chinese, demand the preference on this point. The Armenian, the Celtic, and the Coptic, come before us laden with the venerable marks of hoary antiquity; and the former builds its claim upon the resting of the ark on its mountains. The Greek appeals to its extent and copiousness. Some have attempted to derive the Hebrew itself from the Teutonic. The arguments produced in favor of the Chinese, are principally, the antiquity of that nation: their early acquaintance with the arts and sciences: their separation, in all ages, from all other nations: and the singularity of the language itself; which consists of few words, all monosyllables, and is remarkable for its simplicity, having no variety of declensions, conjugations, or grammatical rules. These singularities have been deemed strong marks in its behalf, as the original language: besides the presumption that Noah was the founder of the Chinese nation. Each of the Oriental languages have strenuous supporters; but the palm is more generally awarded to the Syriac. The Jews warmly defend the Hebrew tongue; and refer to the etymologies of the names transmitted to us by Moses. In some instances the sacred historian himself has marked their propriety, and the relation which they bear to the person, or place designed by them: but there are others, not so distinguished, in which no

such relation can be traced; and the question to be decided is, whether he has preserved the original terms, or, according to the practice of all ancient writers, accommodated them to the dialect of the language in which he wrote? The most probable conclusion, from this endless diversity of opinion, is—either that the original language is lost; or that it is spoken under variations which render it equivalent to a new tongue; or, that, even supposing it to exist, it cannot be ascertained.

V. 2. “*And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.*” The extent and situation of the land of Shinar, is not easily determined. There, the city and tower of Babel were erected. Thither, Nebuchadnezzar carried away the vessels of the temple, to the house of his god: which, in all probability, was the temple of Belus, in Babylon. This confirms the general opinion, that the temple of Belus was erected upon the ruins of the tower of Babel; or, at least, that Babylon stood upon, or near, the spot, where this vast design was projected, and partly executed. The part of Mesopotamia, chosen by the astronomers, in the time of the Khalifah al Mamum, for measuring the content of a degree of a great circle, was the desert of Senjar; the nature of the experiment required the selection of a large and level country; and this is probably a part of the ancient plain of Shinar.\* Upon the whole, we will venture to call it Chaldea.

V. 3 and 4. “*And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick and burn them thoroughly. And they*

\* Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. I, book i, chap. 2. The reader may find much learned discussion, on all the points under review in this part of the Lecture, in that laborious work.

*had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."* It has been imagined by some, that this elevation was reared in fear of a second, deluge: we deem this improbable, from their choice of situation, and because other, and sufficient, motives, are assigned in the history. The celebrated and eloquent Saurin says: "The impressions which the waters of the deluge had made upon the imagination of Noah, and of his family, caused them to live in places the most elevated, and the least accessible to inundations. They dwelt upon the mountains of Armenia, in the neighborhood of that place where the ark rested. But an hundred and forty four years afterwards; according to the computation of one of the most celebrated chronologists; these fears were entirely dispersed: they diffused themselves over the vallies and the fields; and occupied the plains of Chaldea, or of Babylon."\* Had they designed this tower as a bulwark against a second deluge, they would have chosen an elevated country rather than a plain. Two reasons are assigned, in their consultation, for this project:

1. That they might make themselves *a name*: that they might leave a memorial behind them. The desire of living in the remembrance of posterity, and of securing an immortal renown, has burnt with inextinguishable ardor, in the human bosom, in every age. Absalom set up for himself a pillar; because he had "no son" to "keep his name in remembrance." The principle which laid the foundation of the tower of

\* Saur. Discours. &c. Sur la Bible, Sam. I. Disc. x, p. 65.

Babel, raised the lofty pyramids of Egypt; has reared many a proud city; and, more than once, has turned the world into "a field of blood."

2. That they might *not* be dispersed: "*lest* we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." Their project to live together, opposed the manifest design of Deity, that the whole earth should be speedily peopled. Some have translated the words—"Let us make us *a sign*, lest we be scattered;" and conclude that they intended this tower to serve as a beacon, or mark, by the direction of which, they might avoid straying with their flocks, (for the first men were shepherds) and regain the city, which they had chosen for their residence, after the temporary wanderings required by their occupations. The result of their consultations, whatever were their motives, was the commencement of that stupendous work—the tower of Babel.

Respecting the tower itself, Moses informs us, that "they used brick instead of stone, and slime instead of mortar." This slime was a pitchy substance, called *bitumen*, which abounded in the neighborhood of Babylon; and, forming a strong cement, was admirably adapted to their purpose. It is universally admitted, that the tower had its ascent on the outside—a broad road gradually winding round it: of course, the tower itself grew proportionably narrow as it increased in height, and assumed a spiral form. If you imagine a path, winding round the representations which are made of the pyramids of Egypt, you will form a complete idea, of the general description transmitted to us of the tower of Babel.

V. 5—9. "*And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.*"

*And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth."* There is a merciful condescension to be perceived in all parts of the sacred writings, in stooping to our conceptions, by the use of familiar terms, and of language continually on our own lips. Had the inspired penmen been commissioned, at all times, to represent things as they really are, we should have derived no benefit from their communications: we should have had words, but not ideas: we should have been incessantly floating on the surface of uncertainty, bewildered and lost, in the loftiness of the subject. But God speaks to us, as though he were "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh:" he enters into all our passions: he uses our language: he brings down heavenly subjects to the standard of our comprehension. In travelling through the land of scripture discovery, we are at home; we are surrounded by objects, and encompassed with imagery, perfectly familiar to us; and "a wayfaring man, though a fool, cannot err therein." The consequence is, that this volume is found to speak to the heart: it "approves itself to every man's conscience:" it possesses an irresistible influence over his life, while it descends to the level of his understanding. Because we have no conception of

pure spirit—spirit distinct from matter—or of its powers—or of its agency—or of its operations—the Deity is represented as acting like a man. We read of his penetrating eye; his powerful hand; his majestic voice; his trackless footsteps; his melting bowels; his compassionate heart. He is angry: he relents: he loves: he entreats. He ascends and descends; he rides upon the clouds; he walks through the earth. He is a father—and he has a father's heart. He manifests paternal anxiety—paternal affection—paternal superintendence—paternal displeasure—paternal forgiveness. Every one feels the force of the image; every one sees in himself the ungrateful, perverse child; every one understands, his relation to God, and acknowledges the obligations under which he is laid to him. The imagery renders every thing luminous: while the representation of facts as they are—a Being without passions, and without any resemblance to any one object with which we are acquainted—would overwhelm the mind with perplexity, and overshadow the subject with impenetrable darkness. Of the class described, is the passage before us: in it are many bold figures of speech; for the Eternal fills all space with his presence, and can neither ascend nor descend; and when such language is used, it is in accommodation to our conceptions, and to our modes of speaking.

The work was displeasing to God; and the source of his displeasure was, that it opposed his express command, “replenish the earth:” which could not be done while they continued in one place. In order to scatter them abroad, he compelled them to relinquish their project, by confounding their language: from which circumstance, the city and tower took the name of *Babel*, which signifies *confusion*.

THE CONFUSION OF LANGUAGE, became the means of the DESTRUCTION OF BABEL: and from its importance and consequences, is an event worthy the place which it occupies, in the Mosaic history. As to the manner in which it was effected, as in every subject so remote and undetermined by the historian himself, there is a diversity of sentiment. Some suppose that the words only imply a misunderstanding among the builders; and that he set them at variance, by causing a division of counsel. Others understand by them a temporary confusion of speech; causing them to misapply terms, and misconceive each other in the use of the same language. Others are of opinion, that a variety of inflexions were introduced, and perhaps some new words; which disturbed and perverted the former manner of expression. But the plain and express terms of the history go beyond these hypotheses; it is evident that the inspired historian designs to exhibit a complete confusion of tongues; which will account for the endless diversity of languages, and the source of the division of mankind into different and distinct nations. There are languages which have no visible connexion with any other tongue whatever; and the Chinese is an exemplification of our assertion. This could never have been, had the confusion consisted of a mere variation of dialect; and we wish it to be understood, as our decided opinion, that at the destruction of Babel, new languages were framed; and this by the miraculous and immediate interposition of divine power.

THE DISPERSION OF THE PEOPLE, which followed, we do not imagine was a disorganization of the whole mass of mankind, as a tempest terrifies and scatters a multitude: but simply a division of them; as at the quiet separation of an orderly assembly, every man

falls into his respective party and seeks his home. Every man it is probable, betook himself to the company that spake his own new language; and consented, with them to separate from others. We think that this is implied by the language which Moses adopts in speaking of the division of the earth by the several bands. Of the sons of Japheth, it is said—"By these, were the isles of the Gentiles divided." Respecting the descendants of Ham, he concludes, "These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, in their nations;" unquestionably referring to their situation after their dispersion. The same language is used in relation to Shem. Nothing here wears the appearance of hurry and disorder; on the contrary, the inference appears to us to be, that the dispersion of the people was regular, and the division of the earth performed without confusion.

With respect to THE ORIGIN OF NATIONS, at this distance of time from the great event, little can be said with certainty. A mere outline of the larger divisions can only be made; and this, with scarcely any degree of precision. SHEM, appears for the remainder of his days, to have hovered about the plains of Shinar. From his descendants sprang the inhabitants of Persia,\* Nineveh,† China‡ Mesopotamia, and Phrygia; comprehending the countries westward of Assyria, as far as the Mediterranean.|| HAM, probably, dwelt in Egypt. His descendants occupied Shinar,§ Arabia,¶ Ethiopia,\*\* Africa,†† Phenicia, and the land of Canaan.‡‡ When JAPHETH left Babel, it is uncertain where he settled. His de-

\* From *Elam*.

† From *Ashur*.

‡ From *Arphaxad*.

|| From *Aram*.

§ From *Nimrod*.

¶ From *Cush*.

\*\* From *Mizraim*.

†† From *Phut*.

‡‡ From *Canaan*.

scendants dwelt in Phrygia,\* the eastern part of Asia Minor,† Cappadocia, and Galatia.‡ Most of these divisions, after all, must be considered as conjectural.§ So far we have followed the Mosaic history: we shall produce,

## 2. THE TESTIMONY OF OTHER ANTIENT WRITERS.

The confusion of tongues "is mentioned by profane historians, who write, that mankind used the same language till the "overthrow of the tower of Babylon."¶ The fable of the attempt of the giants to climb the heavens; probably owes its origin to some traditions relative to this fact. It was a common mode of speaking in many nations and in the East especially, when things exceeded the ordinary height to say, that "they reached to heaven."¶ When, therefore, it was said, "Let us build a city, and a tower, whose top may reach to heaven," no more was intended, than Let us build a tower exceedingly high." But when the design descended, by tradition, in its native boldness of expression, to nations unacquainted with the Mosaic history, and with eastern language; who were, also, fond of the marvellous, and skilful in fable; they raised the story of the giants' war with heaven, and celebrated this imaginary contest in verse, as harmonious as majestic.\*\* Josephus quotes one of the Sybils, in the following words: "When all mankind spoke the same language, some of them elevated a tower immensely high, as if they would ascend up into heaven, but the gods sent a wind, and overthrow the tower;

\* From *Gomer*. † From *Ashkenaz*. ‡ From *Togarmah*.

§ See, on this perplexed subject, the laborious researches of the writers of the *Anc. Univ. Hist.* vol. i, book i, chap. 2, §6.

¶ *Anc. Univ. Hist.* vol. i, book i, chap. 2, §5, p. 439.

¶ Consult *Homer*, in various places; and read *Deut.* i, 28, also ix, 1.

\*\* *Homer*, *Odys.* 30. *Ovid.* *Met.* lib. i. *Virg.* *Georg.* i, &c. See also note 2, at the end of the volume.

and assigned to each a particular language; and hence the city of Babylon derived its name.”\* Abydenus uses similar language: “There are, who relate that the first men, born of the earth, when they grew proud of their strength and stature, supposing that they were more excellent than the gods, wickedly attempted to build a tower, where Babylon now stands. But, the work advancing towards heaven, was overthrown, upon the builders, by the gods, with the assistance of the winds; and the name Babylon was imposed upon the ruins. Till that period, men were of one language: but then, the gods sent among them a diversity of tongues. And then commenced the war between Saturn and Titan.”† Before we dismiss this part of the subject, we will only add, that “it is a false tradition of the Greeks that Babylon was built by Semiramis; and this error is refuted by Berosus, in his *Chaldaics*, Josephus in his first book against Appion,” and others.‡ It remains, that we attempt,

### 3. TO ANSWER SOME INQUIRIES ARISING OUT OF THE SUBJECT.

Was there any thing criminal in the attempt to build this city and tower, considered in itself? We feel no hesitation in answering—No. But a thing perfectly lawful, and innocent in itself, may become criminal from the motives in which it originates, or the consequences connected with it. There were two ways in which this attempt, harmless in itself, was rendered criminal. First, the foundation of the work was laid in *ambition*. And what is ambition, but another name for every complicated vice which degrades humanity,

\* See Joseph. de Antiq. Jud. Lib. i, cap. 4, Tom. i, Hud. edi.

† See note 4, at the end of this volume.

‡ See note 5, at the end of this volume.

and fills the world with sorrow? What so soon erases human feelings, as ambition? What so hardens the heart against the voice of woe, as ambition? What violates the sanctity of truth, and disregards principles usually deemed sacred in society, with such facility, as ambition? What so completely transforms the character, as ambition? What so readily leads the bosom astray, as ambition? What peoples the grave, like ambition? How early it began to work in the world! and how unceasing and unimpaired has its influence continued! "Let us make us a name!" was the hope that deluded these first men; and many a subsequent projector, on the same vain principle, has built a Babel to his own confusion! And what heart is altogether dead to the passion? It was criminal, secondly and principally, we presume, because it had a tendency to counteract the *designs of God*: which designs had been explicitly communicated. The mandate of heaven is, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." This required them to spread themselves abroad upon its surface. But they deliberately and avowedly adopt a contrary resolution; and "build a city and a tower, lest" they should "be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

Would not men, by degrees, have separated without the alteration of language? It is very probable, that ambitious projects, in which they might not all concur, would have effected a separation: but in such a case, we can scarcely imagine, that such a division would take place without bloodshed. By the interposition of heaven, they separated peaceably. Besides time would slowly have brought that to pass, which God accomplished at once; and had it been left to operations so gradual, the replenishing of the earth had

been greatly retarded. Not to say that without a dissonance of language, to a great degree the divisions of nations would have been lost; and they would, probably, have blended again together. To this hour, language is the strongest line of separation drawn between man and man; and one of the most powerful bulwarks of the distinction subsisting between different nations.

Would not language of itself have changed, as the people multiplied, without the interposition of Divine power? Of this, there can be no question: but in this case, it would only be a change of dialect, and not of language. In the revolution of a few centuries, what alterations have been made in our own tongue! Roll back but three or four hundred years, and we feel ourselves incapable of reading the dialect which our forefathers spoke. Yet rude and barbarous as it appears, in it may be traced the basis of our present copious language. And, estimating the changes which time would have made, they will be found too gradual to have effected any separation. The alterations produced by years, are small, and slowly brought about: they consist, in changing a few words in the course of a century: forming a few others; and dropping, as obsolete, an inconsiderable number before in use. This effects no division in a nation; and the same progression would have brought about none in the great body of mankind. Generation after generation would have passed, while the most trifling changes were forming. No motives would have been furnished for their living apart: no necessity would have arisen, from this quarter, for their dispersion. But Deity interposed, to effect his own purpose; which was readily and completely accomplished by the confusion of language. We hasten,

## II. TO DEDUCE FROM THIS FACT, SOME CONSIDERATIONS ADAPTED TO OUR INDIVIDUAL IMPROVEMENT.

The prophet, whose words, at the commencement of the Lecture, we connected with the Mosaic history, has furnished us with a thread of reflection, which cannot fail to conduct us to the right use which we ought to make of this singular narrative. He has pronounced the application of the subject. "The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down saith the LORD!" Had he stood by and seen the project of these men, in its proud advance, and in its disastrous issue, he could not have painted their presumption, their folly, and their humiliation, in more striking language. The following remarks appear clearly deducible from these words:

1. MOST OF OUR ERRORS ORIGINATE IN THE "PRIDE OF OUR HEARTS;" AND THIS PRIDE WILL ALWAYS BE FOUND TO HAVE "DECEIVED" US.

It was this pride that dictated the haughty language of the king of Babylon, when, from the battlements of his palace, he looked down upon his beautiful city, and said—"Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" O, how the "pride of his heart deceived" him! "While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; the kingdom is departed from thee!" The

“same hour” was he “driven from men,” and his “dwelling was with the beasts of the field:” his reason was withdrawn,—“and his body was wet with the dew of heaven.” Behold, he that would be thought a God, is become less than a man! Nor were the balances of power again put into his hand, till he had been brought to confess, “that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will;” and to acknowledge, in a repentant decree, that “those who walk in pride, he is able to abase.”

Happy had it been for his successor, if this awful display of divine justice, had wrought in his heart, obedience. But Belshazzar learned not wisdom from his grandfather’s humiliation. He exceeded his great progenitor in impiety. He stood on the pinnacle of empire, till he was giddy with gazing upon the rolling world beneath him! The forces of Cyrus surrounded the city: but, trusting in its impregnable strength, the defence of the river, and the greatness of his stores, he laughed his enemies to scorn. The feast was spread, and the revellings had commenced. Death hovered round his court, and destruction brooded over his city, while he was sunk in senseless security. And now, the voice of joy, and the noise of riot, resound through the palace. The monarch calls upon his nobles to devote the hours to gaiety; to scatter their fears to the winds; to drink defiance to the warrior advancing to their very gates; and, to fill the measure of his iniquity, to add insult to the miseries of his captives, to crown dissipation with sacrilege, he requires, last of all, the vessels of the sanctuary, that they might be profaned by their application to not merely common uses, but to the vile purposes of debauchery. It is done. The king is lost in unbounded pleasure, and intoxicat-

ed with unlimited power. In one moment, the voice of riot ceases,—silence, as profound as the stillness of the grave, reigns through the whole palace—every tongue is chained—every eye is fixed—despair lowers on every countenance—the charm is broken—and the night of feasting is turned into unutterable horror! See! yonder shadow, wearing the appearance of the fingers of a man's hand, glides along the wall of the palace opposite the monarch, and writes, in mysterious characters, “MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.” What has changed that youthful countenance? What has chased its bloom of beauty, and drawn on it the strong lines of misery? Behold, this king, who lately dreamed that he was more than mortal, trembling on his throne! “The joints of his loins are loosed, and his knees smite one against another!” What the army of Cyrus could not do, a supernatural hand, writing four little words, has effected; and his soul melts within him through terror! But say, what is the cause of this premature distress? Perhaps yonder inscription declares the permanence of his kingdom; and inscribes, in those hidden characters, the destruction of his enemies? Ah no!—Conscience read to well the handwriting: and interpreted the solemn sentence of impending ruin, long before Daniel explained the inscription! While all was riot, during the first part of the night, and dismay, during the remainder, Cyrus had diverted the river from its course, had entered the city, through its exhausted channel, unperceived and was now at the palace gates. The empire was lost; the captive Jews were liberated: and “that same night was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, slain.” Behold another, added to the innumerable sad evidences, that the

"pride of the heart" fatally "deceives," and finally ruins those who cherish it.

2. SITUATIONS IN LIFE, WHICH SHOULD LAY THE FOUNDATION OF GRATITUDE, WHEN UNSANCTIFIED, BECOME THE BASIS OF REBELLION.

The prophet addressed those "who dwelt in the clefts of the rock, and whose habitation was high:" who enjoyed both an elevated, and a secure situation. This should have ministered to thankfulness: it should have reminded them of the hand that raised them to the eminence which they occupied. But no: it kindled "pride of heart:" it inflamed the imagination with the desire of independence: it stirred up rebellion: it implanted in their bosoms false confidence: it betrayed them to their ruin. They said, "Who shall bring me to the ground?" But the birth of their presumption was the death of their security: for while they spake these "great swelling words" of arrogance, the protection of God was withdrawn. Adversity has "slain its thousands:" but prosperity its "tens of thousands." Those that have weathered the tempests of suffering, have been ingulfed in the whirlpool of dissipation. Elevation makes the head unsteady and the feet totter; therefore, if providence exalt you, hold fast the hand which conducts you to the perilous summit.

3. NO SITUATION IN LIFE, HOWEVER APPARENTLY FORTIFIED, IS SECURE, WHEN GOD IS OUR ENEMY.

"Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord." How clear and express are these words! "Though thou exalt *thyself*." When God elevates a man, he gives him grace equal to his temptations: but there are, who make haste to be rich—who press through every consideration to power—

who *will* be great—and “exalt *themselves*” at the sacrifice of every principle. Yonder city rises on that determination. The tower rapidly advances. It is of prodigious strength and magnitude. But its desolation is decreed in heaven; and although it aspired to the stars, it is brought down to the ground. Let us, therefore, stoop to rise. Let us “humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God; and he shall exalt us in due time.” If we would build securely, we must lay the foundation of our edifice on the top of yonder everlasting hills, and set up its walls in the unchangeable heavens: for

“He builds too low, who builds beneath the skies!”

What, then, is their state, who are laboring to ascend to heaven by a superstructure of their own elevation? who “reject the righteousness of God, and go about to establish one of their own?”—“The pride of their heart hath deceived them;” and divine agency alone can destroy the delusion. What shall be said to those who imagine themselves in security, yet have not “fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them?” Even now is the decree of heaven gone forth against all ungodliness: even now is the sentence of condemnation issued against the impenitent: even now conscience thunders, “Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting!”—and God confirms the decision!

## LECTURE V.

### THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH.

GENESIS XIX, 15—26.

*And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. And Lot said unto them, Oh not so, my Lord: Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die: Behold now this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live. And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken. Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called*

*Zoar. The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.*

2 PETER II, 6.

—*Turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow; making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly.*

THE history of Genesis is peculiarly interesting, because it soon leaves the wide concerns of nations, and attaches itself to individuals. It discovers to us the Deity commanding "light to shine out of darkness;" and presents a short, yet comprehensive, account of things the most sublime and difficult: it relates the destruction, and the revolution, of the world; it gives us a clue by which we are enabled to trace the origin of nations; and after having thus opened a boundless scene before us, it relieves the mind, bewildered and wearied in its researches, by fixing the attention upon one quiet object. We find ourselves transported into the bosom of a family; and are encompassed, before we are aware, with the beauties and the pleasures of domestic life. We unite in their devotions: glow with their ardor: weep with their sorrows; and rejoice in their prosperity. The fluctuations of empires, the revolutions of states, the achievements of ambition, distract and tire our attention: but in entering into the concerns of a

family, every man feels himself at home—in pursuing the hopes and fears, the labors and disappointments, of an individual, every man traces the image of his own anxieties and pleasures.

When we turn over the pages of profane writers, what different scenery is presented! We justly admire the beauties of Homer: as a poet truly sublime; possessing a genius which soared high above the common standard of human intellect. In energy of composition, in loftiness of language; in richness of imagery, he stands unrivalled—he ranks next to the sacred writers. But in his works, from first to last, we are dragged through fields of slaughter: or trace the mortifying windings of human corruption: or are surrounded with scenes, over which humanity drops tears of universal regret. We hear in strains, the most harmonious, a hero sung, returning from the battle, covered with human blood. The martial music that announces his approach, is drowned in the shrieks of orphans. The laurel of which he proudly boasts, was nourished in the empurpled plains of carnage, and snatched from the field of death.

Hail, peaceful retreats! Ye calm, sequestered, tranquil tents, that stretched your quiet shadow over the head of the venerable patriarch, and shielded him from the heat of the day—welcome to the mind's eye! Far be the scene of desolation! Approach, ye gentle shadows that once lived in this valley of tears; and even now that ye are borne away to heaven, return to our imagination, and revisit us in the sacred pages! Let the maddening world seek “the battle of the warrior with confused noise:” we love to observe the pleasing bonds of friendship, and to admire the domestic felicity of a pious family. To the hero, who

delights in "garments rolled in blood," we consign the pages that describe, in colors, alas! too natural, the horrors of war. Be it ours, to listen to the music of the grove; to trace the windings of the rivulet; to read the name of God in the starry heavens; and to follow the good man through his chequered life, to a "city of habitation." While others burn with the ardor of the warrior, let us glow with the exalted piety shining through the character of those good men, who borrowed all their lustre from friendship with God!

After the memorable event, which formed the subject of discussion in the last Lecture, we are introduced, rather suddenly, to the great progenitor of the Jewish nation: in whose "seed," it is promised, "all nations of the earth shall be blessed." Terah, the father of Abraham, descended in a direct line from Seth. Idolatry had already commenced, and was widely diffused, when. "Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there. And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran." Idolatry was probably the cause of this removal. The city in which they dwelt was the centre of superstition: it was called *Ur*, which signifies *fire*, or *light*; a name which was probably given it, like Heliopolis, because it was devoted particularly to the worship of fire, and consecrated to the sun.\* It appears that God had expressly testified his will, that Abram should proceed to Canaan; and, obeying the call of heaven, "he went out, not

\* See note 1, of this Lecture, at the end of the volume.

knowing whither he went." At an advanced age, this patriarch left his home, and his connexions: for he was "seventy-five years old, when he departed out of Haran." Lot, his brother's son, accompanied him. Possibly, as he was childless, it was Abram's intention to adopt him: but a better, and a stronger, reason, for his attachment to his uncle, was, that the hand of heaven had touched his heart; and that he acted in obedience to the same divine mandate, which had led Abram into a strange land, even when the pressure of years was bending his steps towards the valley of the shadow of death.

Oh, the triumphs of faith! It overlooks intervening years, and regards the promised blessing as already in possession! It removes every difficulty; answers every objection; and never rests till its end is obtained! Exercised by delays, it patiently endures: corrected by trials, it prepares its possessor for the good to which it is pressing forward; and crowned with ultimate success, it throws over him a glory, undiminished by the revolution of years, and untarnished by the hand of age.

To manifest how large a portion of this grace this truly great man possessed, he was named, "the father of the faithful;" and so pleasing in the eyes of Deity were the traits of his character, that God conferred upon him a title more dignified, more glorious, and more enviable, than the greatest monarch, and the proudest conqueror, ever enjoyed—he was called, "the Friend of God."

Yet was he *but* a man! His exalted character—and his holy life—were sometimes tarnished with human weakness. Oh! where was his faith in the protecting hand of heaven, when unguardedly, yet deliberately,

he sought refuge in prevarication, to save himself from violence in Egypt, on account of his wife? "Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister!" It was not indeed an absolute falsehood in point of fact; but it was a wilful intent to deceive, which enters directly into the nature, and forms all the character, of lying. The compassion of God to human infirmity, was manifest, in casting a mantle of forgiveness over this sinful pusillanimity. The hand of Deity was still stretched out in his defence; and his unchangeable Friend was better to him than his fears. But as he used unlawful means to secure his safety, his sin was made his punishment. Pharaoh, justly exasperated at the deception practised upon him; and fearing the anger of God, who had afflicted his house with great plagues; restored his wife, but banished him from his dominions. Thus, simply, in the use of the means, to rely upon God, in the hour of peril, will always defend us from danger, and deliver us from evil: but to distrust the Deity, and to shelter ourselves under our own unlawful, or sinful, devices, exposes us to incalculable difficulties, and will involve us in trouble, in the very midst of deliverance.

As Abram journeyed in the road by which he had descended into Egypt, he came again to an altar, which he had before set up, in his way thither. Sweet are the recollections of kindnesses received; and pleasant the memorials of mercies departed! If we were to accustom ourselves to rear tokens of remembrance for every assistance which we derive from God; and to erect an altar where we receive a mercy; how many evidences for good would be presented in the retrospection of our lives; and the review of the past, would create confidence for the future. The moss might grow over the pillar, and the fire of the altar would

go out: but the inscription would be fresh on the tablet of memory, and gratitude would kindle the purer flame of affection in the heart. Thus Abram reared an altar in his way to Egypt; and found it again on his return. Thus Jacob elevated a pillar, at Bethel, after his vision of God; and with what feelings did he revisit it, when he was delivered from his fears, and increased in his blessings! Thus "Samuel" took a stone, "and set it up between Mizpah and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped us!'" It is not necessary that we should erect these outward memorials: but let the pillar be raised in our bosoms, and the inscription read in our lives!

Multiplied in goods, at length it became necessary that Abram and Lot should separate. There are few blessings of life unalloyed—few trials unmingled. The good that we pant after, has some unseen evil annexed to it, which will arise to cloud it in the very moment of possession; and the evil that we deprecate produces some happy effect, which does not always cease when its immediate cause is withdrawn. Adversity often unites the various branches of a family—prosperity as frequently separates them. The one teaches them that they ought to have a common concern—the other has an unhappy tendency to persuade them that they have a separate interest—and in many instances the latter is but too successful! Prosperity divided Abram and Lot. The place was too strait for their flocks; and the herdmen, on either side, had augmented the difficulty by contention. Oh! who will not admire the spirit of Abram? "And Abram said unto Lot, 'Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between thee and me—between thy herdmen and my herdmen—for we

are brethren! Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right: or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left!" Although the elder, he thought it no disgrace to yield; and, by his submission, proved his greatness of mind. As the younger, it was the duty of Lot to have stooped: as the superior, Abram might have commanded. But no—his language is, "We are brethren!" Lovely spirit of pure and undefiled religion! how it fosters the charities of human life! how it sooths the turbulence of passion! how it promotes the peace of society! It quenches the spark that was just bursting into a conflagration. It unites more closely the knot that was almost unfolded. It knits together the link that was nearly broken. It extinguishes the torch of war; and banishes contention from the domestic circle. Lot chose the plain of Jordan, near Sodom and Gomorrah, into which he afterwards entered, and where he resided; and it was "well watered every where, as the garden of the Lord."

The chain of history is broken, to relate in its order, a battle which was fought in the vale of Siddim. This event is recorded in a style exactly suited to the contest. The abrupt manner in which it breaks in upon the peaceful history, appears adapted to the relation of a tumult, which suddenly destroyed the harmony of the country, and depopulated cities, previously slumbering in tranquillity. Where now is the fruitful plain? the vallies watered by a thousand rills? and the smiling pastures, which charmed the eye of Lot? Ah! war has shaken his destructive scourge over them—has blasted their verdure—and transformed, by his withering frown, this terrestrial paradise into a deso-

late wilderness! Lot himself was taken prisoner. No sooner were the tidings brought to Abram, than he roused to exertion; and arming his household, to the amount of three hundred and eighteen men, he rescued his brother and delivered the vanquished captives. The only difficulty arising here is this: how was it possible for Abram, with three hundred and eighteen men, to oppose successfully *four* kings; and to prevail over their armies already flushed with conquest? To remove this apparent objection to the sacred history, it is necessary to remark, that these kings were nothing more than rulers of four little cities, close by each other, whose combined forces, in that battle, probably, did not so considerably exceed Abram's armed servants as a superficial reader might imagine. It should also be remembered, that Abram closely pursued, and overtook them, when they were wearied with the toils of battle, sunk in revellings and unsuspecting of danger. The nerve of war was relaxed; and the softness of sensuality had already overpowered them. The servants of Abram possessed their full vigor; and the banner of divine protection waved over their heads.

On his return from this conquest, we are introduced to a very extraordinary personage. Melchisedec met him, blessed him, and received tythes at his hand. Little is known, and much has been conjectured, respecting this august stranger. His names appear to denote a character of moral excellence. *Melchisedec* signifies *king of righteousness*; and *Melchisalem*, translated in our bibles, "king of Salem," implies *king of peace*. The apostle who wrote to the Hebrews, considers him as a type of the Lord Jesus; and describes him "without father, without mother, without descent; having neither beginning of days nor end of life."

The obvious meaning of these declarations is, that we know nothing of his birth—nothing of his death—neither can we trace his genealogy. Introduced thus abruptly, he disappears as suddenly; and we hear of him no more. The veil is lifted to discover him; and having just seen him, it is dropped—and hides him from us for ever!

The toils of battle are succeeded by a solemn interview with Jehovah. "The word of God came to Abram in a vision." It was a word of consolation; it was a message of encouragement. A son was promised; and it was declared his seed should be, "as the stars of heaven,"—innumerable. As a ratification of this solemn engagement, he was commanded to prepare a sacrifice. During the whole day, he waited the promised visit from heaven; "and when the fowls came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away." But "when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him." Then the Deity renewed the promise before made to him; and predicted the slavery and the deliverance of his descendants in Egypt. And this was the sign of the covenant: "it came to pass, that when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold, a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp, that passed between the pieces."

O Christian! in religious worship, guard against intruding thoughts: they are as the fowls descending to pollute, and to devour, thy sacrifice: like Abram, let it be thy effort to drive them away. Guard the offering from the unhallowed intruders; and if God delay, patiently wait the manifestation of his presence. "The vision is for an appointed time; it will come, it will not tarry" beyond the moment of divine appointment.

Enter with solemnity into the presence of God; and approach him with seriousness. Every visit from the Divinity, is awful. "An horror of great darkness fell upon Abram." "And Jacob awakened out of his sleep, and he said, 'Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not.' And he was afraid, and said, 'How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!'"

A new source of sorrow soon arises; and Abram's domestic tranquillity is broken, by a contention between his wife and the servant whom she had given to cover what she deemed her reproach. What a chequered scene is the life of the best of men! Sometimes irradiated with the glory of divine intercourse: at others, clouded by public, or domestic, trial. Abram is "a stranger, and a pilgrim." The beauty of his wife ensnares him in Egypt. His prevarication drives him thence. Their mutual prosperity renders a separation between him and Lot necessary—and effects the division. War breaks in upon his repose; and requires him to 'crush his aged limbs in ungentle steel.' He forgets his labors and sorrows, in the blessings of divine communion, and in the soothing promises of a gracious covenant; when a contention is kindled, which consumes his dearest comforts; an affliction springs up, which touches him in the most tender part; and his house becomes "divided against itself." Trials from without may be endured; and the man retires from the scene of strife and mortification, to a smiling family circle: he regains his temper, reassumes his tranquillity, renews his smiles, and forgets his vexations; but when domestic harmony is destroyed, the very sources of peace are dried up; and it is in vain to look abroad for consolation. The man's joys are pol-

luted at their very fountain; and all their separate streams will necessarily flow defiled through all their ramifications. Peace affrighted, frequently flies from the tumults of the world, and alights, an angel form, in the bosom of a family: but if she is a stranger at home, we shall look for her in vain at the exchange of merchandize, and in the public walks of life.

The issue of this contest was—Hagar fled. While she was prosperous and vain, she was left to taste the bitterness of her own folly: but the moment earth abandoned her, heaven took up her cause: God became the friend of the fugitive; and her name no sooner appeared on the list of the desolate, than the care of her fortunes was transferred from man to the Deity; and he became her guardian. She was culpable: and her fault had its correspondent penalty. Her foolish pride had embittered the peace of the family; and she lost the shelter of the roof under which she had introduced discord. We are displeased with the culprit: but we are moved at her punishment. A voice more than human is heard in the solitude; and arrests her attention. An angel is sent to her with a message full of consolation. Her eyes, which were clouded by sorrow, no sooner glanced upon her unexpected and illustrious visitor, than a gleam of hope illumined them: but when he unfolded the singular character, and the future fortunes, of her unborn child, they brightened into the full radiance of joy. It was ordained that his name should be Ishmael; and it was predicted concerning him, “He will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man’s hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.” His descendants, the Arabs, have well accomplished the prophecy, at every period of their history. Living

by plunder, and in perpetual warfare with all the world—remote from cities, and scattered in wandering tribes over the desert—resisted, yet invincible—they are “wild men;” their “hand is against every man”—and “every man’s hand is against them”—and they “dwell in the presence of all their brethren.” Heaven does not interpose to cherish a proud spirit, but to subdue it; and Hagar, having provoked the harshness with which her mistress treated her, is expected to make concessions, and commanded to return to Sarai. Her master’s roof once more shelters her; and under its shadow the promised child is born.

Thirteen years from this period, God renewed his covenant with Abram; and gave the seal of circumcision. On this memorable occasion, the names of the patriarch, and of his wife, were changed to ABRAHAM and SARAH, as more appropriate to the blessings that awaited them. *Abram* signifies *high*, or *exalted father*—a name of great respectability: *Abraham* implies *father of nations*—a name that embraces the latitude of the divine promise. *Sarai* signifies *MY princess*—an appellation of fond regard: *Sarah* implies *A princess*—a title of honor, dignity, and dominion.

In the same year the Deity again visited him as he sat at the door of his tent on the plains of Mamre. Three personages, apparently men, approached him; but although so thick a veil concealed them, he soon discovered that they were more than human. The promise of a child by Sarah, was confirmed by new protestations. We presume not to develop the mystery of these three extraordinary characters. Various conjectures have been formed respecting them; and to listen to conjectures is a fruitless and an endless labor. The person who remained with Abraham, when two departed towards Sodom, carries features of marked

pre eminence; and is expressly called JEHOVAH. Some have supposed that an angel, bearing the commands of Deity, was honored with that awful name, and used the lofty and dignified language which appears on this part of the sacred record. We believe that, on this supposition, this instance is unparalleled in the scriptures. Others again imagine, as it appears to us, with greater reason, that it was the Son of God, attended by two angels. To him, this great and lofty name belongs by right; and to him it is repeatedly assigned in the Bible. Jeremiah applies it to Jesus Christ without scruple. "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch; and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days, shall Judah be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; *and this is the NAME whereby he shall be called—JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.\**"

The two angels having departed, the august personage, who bears every feature of Deity, and whom Abraham addresses with all the humility which a deep sense of the Divine presence alone can inspire, imparted his displeasure, and his designs against Sodom and Gomorrah, with the cities of the plain.† The remembrance of Lot, conspired with the feelings of humanity, to raise the combined voices of affection and of pity on behalf of the rebels doomed to destruction. Compassion touched his heart for the offenders, while he loathed their guilt; and the residence of a part of his own family among them, suggested a plea,—“Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?” His language is powerful; for the heart dictated it: but it

\* Jer. xxiii, 5, 6.

† See note 2, at the end of the volume.

is submissive; for the spirit of real religion directed it. What a pattern for us, in our addresses to the Deity! "Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the LORD, which am but dust and ashes!"—"Oh, let not the LORD be angry, and I will speak!"—and this humility introduces and pervades every petition. What a reproof to those who dare to approach the Majesty of heaven irreverently; and to speak with unhallowed familiarity to the high and lofty One who inhabiteth the praises of eternity!

According to the hospitality of the ancients, Lot sat at the gate of the city to invite to his habitation any stranger who might enter. To refresh the heart of the traveller, wearied with the toils of the day, and way-worn; to wash his feet; to give him a morsel of bread, a pillow for repose, a smile of peace; and to send him on his way rejoicing, in the morning—this was practical religion, beaming forth in her native simplicity, from a patriarch's eyes. The two angels, who had left Abraham, approached Sodom. Lot addressed them in language which implied that he was about to receive, and not to confer an obligation. "Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early and go on your ways. And they said, Nay, but we will abide in the street all night. And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat." This is the politeness of nature; and the true method of conferring a favor. It does not appear that, at this time, he knew them: and, referring most probably to this event, the apostle who wrote to the Hebrews directs, "Be not forgetful to entertain stran-

gers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

We draw a veil over the brutal scene which follows.—It is sufficient to remark, that such was the extreme and unpardonable wickedness of those detestable cities, that the indignation of God, manifested on their polluted plains, must be completely justified, even in the apprehension of short-sighted mortals.

At length their commission is opened before Lot. He is commanded to bring all that he held dear from a place devoted to destruction. He was compelled reluctantly to abandon his sons-in-law: who regarded him "as one that mocked." The angels hastened his lingering steps—urged his immediate departure—snatched him from his dangerous hesitation—and left him not, till they had conducted him to a place of safety. "Then the LORD reigned upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven."

We have now touched the principal point of the present Lecture. THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH, is confirmed and established, by evidences at once short, comprehensive, and satisfactory. They are included in the following arrangement: The narrative of Moses: the testimony of ancient writers; and the features of desolation remaining on the spot.

#### I. THE NARRATIVE OF MOSES.

We have selected for our contemplation, the moment when the attention is arrested by the conviction of impending danger; and the point of history where the interest of the reader is excited in anticipation of its issue. The sacred writer discovers in this, as in every record of his pen, singular ability in touching the heart;

while he preserves a wonderful simplicity throughout the whole narration. All is nature in his descriptions; and his assertions bear, on their very face, the impress of truth. With what grandeur the scene opens upon us. The day dawns, which is to vanish from the eyes of the wicked before its meridian; and they gaze, unconscious of danger, upon the earliest glories of the east, which are so soon, as it respects them, to be extinguished in eternal night. Lot emerges from the polluted scenes of depravity, an instance of the goodness of God; and escapes the desolation which demonstrated his just severity. *“And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.”* The night is the season of alarm and of danger. As the gloom thickens, every object wears a portentous aspect. Its solemnity deepens the cloud of affliction; and throws a darker shade over sorrow itself. It is the time for awful deeds. Then the murderer stalks abroad to destroy; and his “feet are swift to shed blood.” Then the adulteress spreads her toils to ensnare. Then violence is prepared to “smite with the fist of wickedness;” and the thief treads softly, that he may “break through and steal.” Then the sinner hastens to iniquity, in imaginary security under the covert of midnight, and says, in the ignorance and presumption of his heart, “Tush! God will not see!” It was at night, that the destroying angel passed through Egypt to slay the first-born: at night, that the sword of the Lord penetrated the camp of Assyria, and destroyed an hundred and eighty five thousand men: at night, that the shadow of a hand wrote on the wall of Belshazzar’s palace, the departure of his kingdom, the close of his glories, and of

his life together, and the scrutiny of justice, with its perilous consequences. But the day has ever been regarded as the season of security. The first ray of the morning chases the phantoms of the imagination, and terminates the horrors of fancy. Light discovers real peril, and bears with it the means of escape. When the day breaks upon us, it scatters peace, and joy, and safety, in its smiles. Ah, how little do we know where danger lurks, and when the dream of happiness shall be broken! Sodom escapes the perils of night, to fall by unexpected vengeance in the morning! *“And while he lingered”*—who that had a heart to feel, and connexions to relinquish; could refrain?—*“while he lingered the men laid hold of his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth and set him without the city.”* A gentle constraint is laid upon him, to snatch him from ruin. It is thus that we feel a divine power gently attracting us from the world to the cross: we are drawn with “the cords of love:” no violence is imposed upon our will in leading us from the paths of death: but we feel, and acknowledge, that it is HE, “who worketh in us to will and to do his own good pleasure.” It is thus when our wandering hearts “follow lying vanities, and forsake their own mercies,” that God sends some gentle and salutary affliction, to chastise our folly, and to bring our spirit home to its rest. *“And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain lest thou be consumed.”* Judgment once awakened is not always directed to discriminate characters; and the righteous are some-

times permitted to suffer in the general calamity. It is not safe to dwell in the tents of sin; and those who take up their abode in the tabernacles of the wicked must be content to share their portion, and their punishment—at least, in the present life. Nothing short, of a total separation from them can afford security: for to linger on the plain is as hazardous as to tarry in the city. *“And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord.”* In the very midst of danger, and while the cloud of ruin hangs over his head, self-willed man cannot refrain from opposing his opinions to the arrangements of Deity; and it must be “according to his mind,” or he will scarcely be satisfied with his deliverance. *“Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight”*—should he therefore presume? *“and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life;”* should he not therefore be satisfied? Is the goodness of God a reason why he should tempt his forbearance? *“and I cannot escape to the mountain”*—why not? What shall hinder when God leads the way? what can successfully oppose, when he commands? *“lest some evil take me and I die!”* O thou of little faith! wherefore didst thou doubt? Was not HE, who led thee forth from the midst of a people given over to utter desolation, strong to deliver? Was he not able to preserve thee? And had he not given a tacit pledge of security, in the very command which he issued? *“Behold now this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one”*—it is a small request that I prefer, in comparison with the unsolicited mercy which thou hast already manifested; or, it is a little city, and may well be spared in so wide and general a destruction as thine offended justice meditates—*“Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live.”*

What is the punishment which awaits the man who dares to lift his little plans to a competition with the wisdom of Deity? Let us adore the long suffering of God! Heaven lends a gracious ear to this supplication; *“and he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken.”* How consistent is this with the character of God, who delighteth to have mercy, and to forgive! Lot had an high gratification in seeing this little object of his compassion escape the devastation of its vicinity, if benevolence urged his plea: but if selfishness dictated it, as the narrative seems to insinuate, he was greatly disappointed: for although his request was granted, his terrors suffered him not to derive from it the advantage which he proposed: since he afterwards abandoned the retreat which he had chosen, and fled to the mountain, whither God had at first directed him, *“for he feared to dwell in Zoar.”* *“Haste thee, escape thither;”* thy presence disarms my wrath, and withholds my righteous vengeance: *“for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither.”* Behold the value and importance of one righteous man? It was the lip of infallible truth, which said of his disciples—*“Ye are the salt of the earth!”* *“Therefore,”* In remembrance of the successful plea of Lot, *“the name of the city was called Zoar,”* which signifies *little*, and relates to the argument which its intercessor used. Most of the names, given to persons, and to things, in the scriptures, bear a reference to some signal circumstances, more nearly, or remotely, connected with them.

*“The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.”* This calm is perfectly natural, and agrees with almost every account transmitted to us, of tem-

pests, earthquakes, and great convulsions of nature. We know that the wind usually falls, and that there is a profound serenity diffused over the atmosphere, before a storm. The former part of that day, in which Lisbon was destroyed by an earthquake, was uncommonly fine; and the danger was not even apprehended, till an unusual subterraneous noise, and a slight trembling of the ground, preceded, for a few moments, the first great shock which almost levelled the whole city. This same agitation of the earth was almost universal, and extended nearly over the whole globe; and in every place where it was felt, the same tranquillity was observed to reign, before the calamity was endured. This calm, however, is unspeakably dreadful! Who can read this single verse without shuddering? As the destruction was unexpected, it was the more terrible; and as it was sudden, it admitted of no escape. The sons-in-law of Lot mocked his admonitions; and they were roused to a sense of their importance and truth, only by the hand of death. Let this consideration prepare us for a still greater event, in the solemnities of which we must all participate; and which will be equally sudden and unexpected: for "as it was in the days of Lot, even so shall the coming of the Son of man be!"

*"Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground."* Some commentators translate the words "brimstone and fire," *brimstone inflamed*; and the interpretation which they build upon this translation is, that brimstone inflamed, in the Hebrew style of writing, signifies neither more nor less, than lightning. It is reasonable to conclude, that

this lightning penetrated so far into the veins of bitumen, with which these plains are known to be impregnated, as to enkindle the combustible matter; which would quickly communicate its heat and flame to the cities, and to the whole country, more entirely and expeditiously than the lava of a burning mountain lays waste the lands over which it flows: and after consuming all that was capable of such a destruction, formed the heavy, fetid, unwholesome lake, called the Dead Sea, from its wide expansion, and the stillness of its waters. Justin observes, respecting this sea, that it cannot be moved by the winds, by reason of the large quantity of bitumen immersed in it; which also renders it incapable of being navigated. The same remark will not be found to apply to the same sea in the present day; as we have instances of some modern travellers having ventured to bathe in it: but this also may be accounted for, on the same principle; the diminution of the bitumen; which is continually removed, by persons on the spot, as it emerges from this singular lake. Neither is it true, that no bird will adventure to stretch his wing across it, as some ancient writers have asserted: for many have been observed to sport along its dreary banks: but the salt with which it is impregnated is inimical to vegetation; its waves retain a sufficient degree of malignity to endanger the health of those who are rash enough to plunge into its unnatural waters; and it retains a sufficient degree of desolation, to justify the description of the destruction suggested in the present Lecture; and to confirm the general account of antiquity, making a reasonable allowance for the alterations which time may be supposed to have effected.

"But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt." A learned writer\* observes, "The sulphureous storm did not begin to fall upon Sodom, till Lot was safely arrived at Zoar. But his wife looked back *before* he reached Zoar: for she looked back *from behind him*, as he was going to Zoar. When she looked back, Sodom and its plains appeared as pleasant as before. She looked back with affection to the place, and regret at leaving it: according to the import of the original word. This implied unbelief." She wavered—"she stopped by the way, and left her husband to go by himself"—in the fluctuations of her mind, "she would proceed no farther; and might be at a considerable distance from Zoar, and so near to Sodom, as, probably, to be involved in the terrible shower, and thereby turned into a nitro-sulphureous pillar:"—or at least to be suffocated by it, and incrust-ed with it. This gives proper force to our Lord's admonition, *Remember Lot's wife.*† Let the judgment of God upon *her*, warn *you*, of the folly and danger of hankering after, and being loath to part with, small and temporal things, when your life and happiness, the greatest, and most lasting concerns, are at stake."

We lead you forwards to another branch of evidence;

## II. THE TESTIMONY OF ANCIENT WRITERS.

It is asserted by Tacitus, that the traces of the fire which consumed these cities were visible in his days. "At no great distance are those fields, which, as it is said, were formerly fruitful, and covered with great

\* Dr. Taylor, in his *Scheme of Scripture Divinity*: now out of print, but preserved in Bishop Watson's *Theological Tracts*, vol. i, chap. xxv, p.106.

† Luke xvii, 32.

cities, till they were consumed by lightning: the vestiges of which remain in the parched appearance of the country, which has lost its fertility.\*”

The testimony of Philo† and of Pliny‡ accords with that of the Roman historian.

Diodorus Siculus describes the lake Asphaltites at large, in two different parts of his work; and concludes his account by saying, “The region round about burning with fire, exhales a stench so intolerable, that the bodies of the inhabitants are diseased, and their lives contracted.§”

Strabo, in writing on the same subject, thus concludes: “There are many indications that fire has been over this country: for about Masada they shew rough and scorched rocks, and caverns in many places eaten in, and the earth reduced to ashes, and drops of pitch distilling from the rocks, and hot streams, offensive afar off, and habitations overthrown; which renders credible, some reports among the inhabitants, that there were formerly thirteen cities on that spot, the principal of which was Sodom; so extensive as to be sixty furlongs in circumference; but that by earthquakes, and an eruption of fire, and by hot and bituminous waters, it became a lake as it now is; the rocks were consumed, some of the cities were swallowed up, and others abandoned by those of the inhabitants who were able to escape||.

Similar to this is the language of Solinus. “At a considerable distance from Jerusalem, a frightful lake extends itself, which has been struck by lightning, as is evident from the ground, black; and reduced to ashes.”¶ He goes on to relate the fable of the apples

\* Tacit. Hist. lib. v.

† Plin. Hist. lib. v. cap. 16.

‡ Strabo. lib. xvi.

§ Philo de Vita Mosis.

¶ Diod. Sic. lib. ii. et lib. xix.

|| Solinus, cap. xxxvi. edit. Salmaisiauzæ

growing near it, which were said to appear fair to the eye, but to contain only sooty ashes, and upon being touched, to exhale into smoke, or to vanish into dust. The same fiction is mentioned also by Tacitus: but we must learn, in receiving the testimony of ancient historians, to distinguish between truth and fable, to separate the former from the latter, with which it is often found overwhelmed, to discriminate between the fact and the legend, to divide that which they saw, from that which they admitted only from tradition, to make allowance for their credulity, and impartially to weigh the evidence which they produce. Moses is not answerable for the fondness which they discovered for the marvellous, nor for the fables which tradition blended with his history. Neither is their account of that which they saw, to be rejected for the easy credit which they gave to that which they only heard, and heard from disputable authority. While the facts of the Mosaic history are confirmed, his superior purity, and consequently credibility is established.

Among the moderns, Bisselius in his treatise on illustrious ruins, and a great number of travellers, have described this singular lake. Maundrel, Volney, Pococke, Shaw, and other men of eminence, have communicated to the public the result of their observations.

Alexander Trallianus mentions an heathen form of exorcism, that confirms the scripture representation of the calamity which overtook Lot's wife. It runs thus—"In the name of God, who turned Lot's wife into a pillar of salt."\* We have yet to examine

\* Dodd. Lect. part. VI. Prop. cix. Demon. 7. page 294, quarto edition. Consult Grot. de Verit. Sect. xiv. in not. See also, for the whole of these quotations, note 3, of this Lecture, at the end of the volume.

## III. THE EVIDENCES REMAINING ON THE SPOT.

We remark,

1. THE APPEARANCE OF THE LAKE, AND OF THE SURROUNDING COUNTRY, HAS BEEN VERY SIMILAR IN EVERY AGE. It has carried the same mournful vestiges of destruction. Not only do the respective testimonies of ancient writers agree with each other, but the several subsequent representations of this fact, given in the Bible, accord entirely with the Mosaic history: a decisive proof that the spot has carried the same features of ruin from the first; and a pleasing evidence that the sacred writings preserve the most perfect harmony with themselves. A selection of a few passages, written at various and distinct periods, will exhibit the appearances of these desolated cities, as they presented themselves to the different writers; and will furnish a coincidence and concord which truth alone can produce. It is worthy consideration, that, in these several passages, appeals are made to this fact as an event well known, and a subject on which the world were, at that time, able to obtain ample satisfaction, by visiting, and considering, the spot itself. Moses refers the Israelites of his day, to the appearance which these wasted plains then presented, as an image of what their own possessions would become if they disobeyed the commands of God. He threatens—"The generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the LORD hath laid upon it; and that the whole land thereof is *brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein*, LIKE THE OVERTHROW OF SODOM, AND GOMORRAH, ADMAH, AND ZEBOIM,

WHICH THE LORD OVERTHREW IN HIS ANGER, AND IN HIS WRATH: even all the nations shall say, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers; which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt.”\* When Babylon is threatened, another appeal is made to this event, as to a fact well known, and indisputably authenticated. Isaiah proclaims her fall, and this is her awful sentence: “Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, shall be AS WHEN GOD OVERTHREW SODOM AND GOMORRAH. It shall *never be inhabited*, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their fold there.”† Jeremiah beheld the same face of things when he made these ruins prefigure the downfall of Edom. “Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof. AS IN THE OVERTHROW OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH, and the neighboring cities thereof, saith the LORD, no man shall abide there, *neither shall the son of man dwell in it.*”‡ Jesus, who is Truth itself, appeals to the same desolation, and to all its circumstances, as an image of his own visitation of the Jewish nation. “As it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it RAINED FIRE AND BRIMSTONE FROM HEAVEN, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the

\* Deut. xxix, 22—25.

† Is. xiii, 19, 20.

‡ Jer. xlix, 17, 18, L. 40.

day when the Son of man is revealed. In that day, he which shall be upon the house top,\* and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE!" The apostle Peter, in the passage read at the commencement of this Lecture, admits this fact into the catalogue of divine judgments against iniquity; and represents the offended and insulted Deity, "TURNING THE CITIES OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH INTO ASHES, condemning them with an overthrow, and making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly." While the writers of the scriptures thus strengthen one another, they evince that the same characteristic ruin, has through all ages, overspread the same country. We observe

2. THERE REMAIN CORRESPONDENT FEATURES OF DESOLATION ON THE SPOT TO THIS DAY. It is readily admitted, that travellers who visit the country in question are liable to be deceived; and that in many instances the inhabitants of the surrounding regions have imposed upon them. Josephus has asserted that the pillar of salt was to be seen in his days, and that he actually saw it. It is disputable, how far this testimony may be received; not that we bring the charge of wilful misrepresentation against him, but that it is probable he was himself deceived. The same credulity which led him to admit the account of a sabbatical river, would easily induce him, visiting the lake, as he did, with a mind prepossessed in favor of some such monument of antiquity remaining, to mistake some rude, mishapen rock, for a crumbling fragment of the pillar of which Moses speaks. Nevertheless,

\* These houses had flat roofs, and an ascent to them on the outside: of course a person at the top would descend without entering the house.

† Luke xvii, 28—32.

we think that the general features of the country, and particularly the lake, are standing memorials of this awful fact. Some indeed have denied that the cities stood upon this spot. But it must be admitted that the universal appearance of the land sanctions the common opinion, that here judgment was executed against the unrighteous inhabitants of Sodom. The description of the face of that unhappy country, given in the passages which we have quoted from the scriptures, and transcribed from ancient historians, accords well with the whole aspect of the vicinity of the Dead Sea. The country is stripped of herbage; the lake, and the soil, are salt and bituminous; and vegetable life seems extinct on all its borders. It would be difficult to fix upon any other spot in the known world, to which the principal features of the narrative would apply. It is to be supposed, from the uniform language of the Bible, that the destruction of these cities was to be a lasting monument of divine displeasure against their wickedness: consequently that strong vestiges of their desolation should remain through every age. It is certain that all the ancient historians who have adverted at all to this singularly awful display of divine justice, have also fixed upon this place, as the theatre on which it was exhibited. It is no less remarkable, that all who have described this lake, and its vicinity, have connected with it a tradition, more or less explicit, respecting the destruction of the cities of the plain; and some of them were men to whom it is scarcely probable, that the writings of Moses were accessible; and who must therefore have received the knowledge of the event through some other channel. May we not also reasonably suppose that some changes have been effected by time, which have considera-

bly altered the aspect, and even the properties of the waters, since the ancient writers, whom we have quoted, visited this land of barren solitude? Time, which alters the whole globe, and overturns empires, would not spare the Dead Sea, and its deserted, naked shores! Jordan perpetually rolls his tide to this gulf: streams of fresh water are continually pouring into it: the Arabs diminish its salt, by draining its water into large pits near the lake, leaving it to be crystallized by the sun; and its bitumen is gathered by the same people, whose ingenuity applies it to many purposes, and who convert it into an article of commerce. We still think, that the spot manifests marked features of desolation at this hour; and the lake is said to be about thirty miles long, and ten miles broad.

Before this subject is entirely dismissed, permit us to make two remarks, which appear to arise out of it.

1. JUDGMENTS DELAYED WILL YET EVENTUALLY BE EXECUTED. To other sins, the ungodly add *that* of presumption. Because serenity reigns over the face of the heavens, they apprehend no evil—they conclude that the tempest will never rise. When the cloud appears “like a man’s hand,” they flatter themselves that it will extend no farther. When you warn them of their danger, and foretel their approaching ruin, they regard you as “one that mocketh.” Even when the heavens are overspread with blackness, and the thunder of indignation begins to roll, they imagine that the storm will spend itself, and that the gloom will pass away. But the day will arrive when the Savior shall appear “to be admired in them that believe,” and to return on the head of his adversaries, the evil which they have devised against his dignity; and *that* day

shall "burn as an oven."\* In vain shall the unrighteous then cry for help, and seek a refuge from the wrath of their judge. In vain shall they turn to the east, the west, the north, or the south; every where the sword of justice meets their eye—every where the tribunal of God rises before their sight—every where the clangor of the last trumpet assails their ears—and the grave itself forms no shelter from the gaze of Omnipotence! In vain shall they call upon the rocks to fall on them, and the mountains to cover them: the earth and the heavens shall flee from the face of "Him that sitteth upon the throne." "Now is the accepted time: behold, now is the day of salvation!"

2. SECURITY IN EVERY SITUATION, BELONGS TO THE FRIENDS OF GOD. You have seen Noah floating securely on the bosom of a destroying flood, while the whole world perished. You have beheld Lot safely conducted out of Sodom, when the inhabitants of the plain, and the perverse scoffers of his own family, were consumed. What is the language of this dreadful event to the respective classes of mankind? To the "ungodly" it is saying—"Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish!" To you, who cast your eyes over these desolated plains, it cries—"Escape for your life"—flee to a refuge more secure than the mountain—and hide under the shadow of the cross! But what is its testimony respecting the people of God? "They shall not be afraid for the terror by night: nor for the arrow that flieth by day: nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness: nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at their side, and ten thousand at their right hand: but it shall not

\* See note 4, of this Lecture, at the end of the volume.

come nigh them! Only with their eyes shall they behold, and see the reward of the wicked." The last storm which shall arise to blot out the sun, to extinguish the stars, to rend the sepulchre, and to raise the dead, shall waft them to an everlasting kingdom. They shall meet the Lord in the air: they shall be changed into his image: they shall appear with him in glory.

O Christian, death is advancing to conduct thee home, to terminate thine afflictions, and to hide thee for ever from the storms of life! Even now the moment arrives! Hark—the trampling of the horses at the door—and the “chariot of fire” waits to bear thee to heaven!

## LECTURE VI.

### THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH.

GENESIS XLIX, 22—26.

*Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall. The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob: (from thence is the Shepherd, the stone of Israel:) Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with the blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts and of the womb: The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of thy progenitors, unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.*

ACTS VII, 9—16.

*And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him, and delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt, and all his house. Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance. But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out*

*our fathers first. And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh. Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls. So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers, and were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor, the father of Sychem.*

TO enter at large into the beautiful history that connects the preceding Lecture with the subject which we are about to propose for consideration, is not practicable; we must therefore imitate travellers in a foreign country, whose limited time will not permit them to pass through the land in the length and the breadth of it—we must inquire what things are most worthy our regard, and to them bend our attention. There are two events previous to THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH, which require us to pause, and to indulge the common feelings of nature, and which cannot fail to impress, because they speak at once to the heart. It is impossible to pass through Canaan without turning aside to the land of Moriah, and contemplating the sacred mountain on which a patriarch's faith triumphed over a father's feelings. According to the promise of God, Isaac was born when Abraham was an hundred years old. He had seen his son preserved from the perils of infancy. His mother had gazed with unspeakable pleasure upon her child—the son of her vows, who was now fast pressing towards manhood. The parents of this amiable youth were looking forwards to a peaceful dismissal from the toils of life, and to the happy termina-

tion of a tranquil old age. Abraham "planted a grove in Beersheba," and rested under its shadow. This quiet retreat, alas, is not impervious to sorrow! This delightful scenery resembles the stillness of the air which usually precedes a tempest—it bodes approaching trial. "And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him—Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah: and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I shall tell thee of."—What a command was this! To stain his hand with the blood of a lamb which he had fed, would be a task to a feeling mind: but the requisition is for a "Son." To select one from a numerous family, would be a cruel effort. Let the mother look round upon her children, when they are assembled before her like a flock, and say, which she could spare from among them? But the demand is, "take thine *only* son"—in whom the life of both parents is bound up. To part with an only child for a season, opens the fountain of a mother's tears, and adds to the grey hairs of his father. To lose him by death, is to cause them to go bitterly in the anguish of their soul all their days. What was it, then, to offer an only son as a sacrifice, and to be himself the priest who should plunge the knife into his bosom? But he obeys—obeys without a murmur! He rises early in the morning to immolate his child, and to offer, on the altar of God, all that he held most dear in this world. On the third day, the destined mountain marks its elevation along the line of the horizon, and meets the eye of the afflicted parent. The servants are not permitted to witness the awful scene, the solemnity of which they might disturb by lamentations—or the ex-

ecution of which they might prevent by force—or, wanting their master's faith, might draw from it inferences unfavorable to religion. At this moment, to awaken in his bosom extreme torture, "Isaac spake unto Abraham his father and said, My father: and he said, here am I, my son. And he said behold the fire and the wood: but where is a lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God shall provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together."—But we will no longer attempt to scent the violet, and to paint the rainbow. We must draw a veil over the scene: for who can enter into a father's anguish as he raised his hand against his child? and who shall be bold enough to attempt a description of his rapture, when heaven, which had put his faith to so severe a trial, commanded him to forbear, and indeed provided itself a victim?

Before we enter upon the immediate subject of this evening's discussion, humanity requires us to drop a tear, also, over the grave of the once lovely Sarah, who "died in Kirjath-arba." Twelve years after the trial of his faith, this heavy stroke of calamity fell upon him; "and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her."—Let not the unfeeling, and the gay, break in upon the sacred privacy of domestic sorrow! It is not the semblance of grief, which spreads a cloud over the forehead of yonder venerable patriarch: real and unaffected anguish causes those tears to flow. She had been long the companion of his life—she had shared his joys and sorrows—she had sojourned in tents with him, a stranger in a strange land—she had regarded him with fondness up to her hundred and twenty-seventh year. Her communion and friendship had sweetened his distresses, and lightened his labors. The

dissolving of this long connexion was loosening the fibres which entwined about his heart; and while he exhibited the resignation of a saint, he felt as a man. Before "the cave of the field of Machpelah" closes its mouth for ever upon the precious dust, let the young and the beautiful come, and look, for the last time, upon the person whose loveliness had kindled desire in every bosom, and had more than once ensnared her husband. Let them gaze upon the dishonor of that, which even time had respected, and age had spared. Let them learn a lesson of humility, while they behold the triumphs of death, and hear a husband entreating "a possession of a burying-place, that he may bury his dead out of his sight," and hide *that* form from his eyes, which he had never before beheld but with rapturous delight!

We pass over the events which occupied the few remaining years of the life of Abraham, and the interesting account of the marriage of Isaac. We leave his two sons, to bury in the grave of their father their mutual animosities; and we commit the dust of that patriarch in silence, to rest by the side of his beloved Sarah, till the morning of the resurrection. We pass over the life of Isaac, whose disposition, according with the kind dispensations of Providence, led him to prefer the tranquillity of domestic life, to the noise of state, and to the applause of fame; and who was "a plain man, dwelling in tents." In the bosom of his family, old age stole upon him, and he heard the voice of years calling him to rest with his father Abraham. The fraud of Jacob. and the sanguinary disposition of Esau, must alike be overlooked; nor can we pause to comment upon that, which might furnish so much instruction—the sad consequences of the deception

which he practised upon his father. Sin necessarily brings with it its own punishment; and it made even this favored child an alien from his father's house, and worse than a servant in the family of an avaricious, unfeeling, unprincipled relation. His mother, whose partiality to him projected and executed the plan for which they both suffered so much in the event, advised him to flee into Mesopotamia, and to "tarry for a few days with his uncle Laban, till his brother's fury should turn away." Alas! more than twenty years elapsed, while he was a sojourner at Padan-aram; and when he returned to the tent of his father, the maternal anxieties and sorrows of Rebekah, were buried with her, deep and silent, in the dust of death! We must drop these instructive records, and meet Jacob restored to his father, just in time to close his eyes: and regarding him henceforward but as the father of Joseph, we must bring forwards so much of his history only, as is interwoven with the life and trials of his beloved son.

Rachel had said "Give me children, or else I die!" How little do we know when our petitions are profitable to us, and when they will prove injurious, if answered in our own way! Not through the rejection, but in the fulfilment, of her desire—Rachel dies! *That* pillar, which solicits the eye of the traveller in the way to Ephrath, tells a mournful story. It says, "that the hand of affection elevated it, as a memorial of departed joys, to point out the spot where a husband lost the delight of his eyes, taken away at a stroke: that a mother was slain upon her bed by the accomplishment of her wish: that the cup of anticipated pleasure was dashed from her pale lips before she tasted its sweetness; and that the man-child, so long desired as the summit of her earthly ambition, was named, as

her soul was in departing, BENONI!" This is its sad inscription—and this is the grave of the mother of JOSEPH!

Introduced under these circumstances, how interesting he appears to every feeling mind! A child robbed of his mother, excites universal commiseration, and commands affection from every bosom. We look forwards with anxiety to every future period of his life; and our prayers, and our hopes, attend every step of his journey. We mingle our tears with his, on the grave of her, whose maternal heart has ceased to beat: for we feel that he is bereaved of the friend and guide of his youth! His father would, but cannot, supply her loss. In vain the whole circle of his friendships blend their efforts to alleviate his sorrows, and to fill the place occupied by departed worth: a mother must be missed every moment, by a child who has ever known, and rightly valued one, when she sleeps in the grave. No hand feels so soft as her's—no voice sounds so sweet—no smile is so pleasant! Never shall he find again, in this wide wilderness, such sympathy, such fondness, such fidelity, such tenderness, as he experienced from his mother! The whole world are moved with compassion for that motherless child: but the whole world cannot supply her place to him!—And to interest your feelings, you are first made acquainted with Joseph, at a period when he had lost the smile, and the superintendence, of his mother!

The history of his life opens upon us, also, when he was of an age to command affection, and to excite solicitude. "Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren." A youth of seventeen is placed in delicate, and dangerous, circumstances: he feels new passions and desires: he is assailed by

new scenes and temptations: he is entering the most perilous path of life, with an immature judgment, a vivid and deceptive imagination, a mind inexperienced and impressible; and his whole life will be deeply affected by the habits which he forms, and the principles which he assumes, at this early period. He, who has weathered the storms, and experienced the wiles of life, feels much solicitude for the unsuspecting youth in taking this first step, which may, perhaps, for ever afterwards, decide his character. The selection of his society is an important concern: he will be moulded into their image, and will be deeply influenced by their example. Joseph associated with his brethren; and it is fit, it is desirable, that "brethren should dwell together in unity;" but experience teaches, that brethren are not always the most suitable companions for each other: too much is frequently expected on both sides, of compliance, submission, or attention, and the bonds of peace are broken asunder. Something like this, appears to have been the case in the family of Jacob: for "the lad was with the sons of Bilbah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report." In this one instance, he does not appear in the most amiable light: for, in every point of view, a talebearer is an odious, and a dangerous person.

"Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colors." Here lies the secret spring of all the subsequent afflictions, both of the parent, and of the child! Could any thing excuse parental partiality, the reasons alleged would do it: but it is not to be excused; and he, who would keep his best beloved safely, must not make it known that he

is the best beloved: for it is a piece of injustice, which nature, in the bosom of a brother, will never pardon. And the fond father must publish his weakness, by bestowing a mark of superior affection upon his darling boy, which would always meet the eye of his brethren, and never could be seen without exciting the worst of passions! Ah, Jacob! what are all the sufferings of thy younger life forgotten? Did not parental partiality drive thee from the shadow of a father's tent, and the embraces of a mother's arms, to want and to servitude? Yet all the afflictions which he endured in the service of Laban, and all that he apprehended from the murderous sword of Esau: all that he feared, and all that he felt; had not guarded his heart against the very weakness which had caused all his troubles. The result was, what might have been expected—"When his brethren saw that his father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him." When a parent feels, and discovers, partiality to any one child above another, he himself is the cause of all the evil that shall arise, to wound his own peace, to render the object of his affection unamiable, to burst asunder the bonds of fraternal unity, to destroy domestic harmony, and to promote discord, strife, envy, and "every evil work."

God—"who speaketh once, yea, twice, yet man perceiveth it not;" who, "in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed, openeth their ears, and sealeth their instruction"—foretold to Joseph, in two separate, yet similar dreams, his future greatness. Before the canon of scripture was completed, divine designs were made known in some more immediate channels; and such methods of communication, as those mentioned in this

book, were frequent, before a written revelation was given, because they were necessary.

With more of honest simplicity, and of childish exultation, than of wisdom, and of prudence, he related these dreams; and the rancor, which already corroded fraternal affection, was increased in the bosom of his envious brethren. They fed their flocks at a distance from home, and it is probable had been absent some days, when the affectionate heart of Jacob yearned to know of their welfare. He resolved to send Joseph, to bear to them a parent's inquiries, and a parent's blessing. He could not but have seen their smothered dislike to this amiable youth: he had surely heard their half-suppressed murmurings: and, no doubt, he marked them with fear and concern. It is not impossible that he reflected upon himself, for having, by his conduct, excited the ferment, which he was now anxious to allay; and, perhaps, he said in his heart—"By sending my child to inquire after their welfare, and making him the servant of their convenience, I shall wipe away their evil impressions against him, and convince them of my regard for *them*." Little did he know the extent of the mischief which his partiality had effected; and as little did he appear to understand that "a brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city!"

Behold, this lad in whom all his father's affections centre, setting out from the vale of Hebron! Already have the trembling lips of Jacob pronounced, "God be gracious to thee, my son!"—and now his aged eyes are following him in his way to Shechem. Did no presentiment of evil shake his heart with unusual fears, when his faltering tongue, said, "farewell?" Yonder youth, lightly treading the ground, and gaily pursuing the path which led him from his father's tent, for ever.

and from his father's presence for twenty-three years apprehends no approaching ill. And although his enemies are cruel as death, there is ONE above, who shall deliver him from all their malice.

Wandering from place to place, his weary feet draw nigh to Dothan; and lo, those whom he seeks are there, watching his approach. Did not his heart leap for joy, when he saw, once more, faces which he knew, and brethren whom he loved? With sentiments far different do they gaze upon the lively hope of their father's old age! "And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him." Ungrateful, and unnatural, that they were! They could see a parent's failings—but could not recognize his kindness! In the person of that beautiful youth, they only saw the favorite of their father: envy had so blinded their eyes, that they did not discover in him, a brother—"bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh."

How does one vice lead the way to another! The man who cherishes one evil passion cannot say where it will end! He, who begins a course of iniquity, cannot draw the line, and say, "Thus far will I go, but no further!" The brethren of Joseph first admitted envy into their bosoms. After lying long, and being cherished there, it generated the thought of bloodshed; and the minds that entertained without pity the idea of murder, easily contrived a lie to impose upon their abused father. "And they said one to another, Behold this dreamer cometh. Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit; and we will say, some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams!"

Remorseless, and abandoned, as were this band of ruffians (for who can pollute the sacred name of *brethren* by applying it to murderers?) it appears that amongst them there was *one*, in whom the flame of duty, and affection, was not wholly extinguished. Reuben retained in his bosom a small portion of respect for his venerable and tried parent, of love to his innocent brother, of the common feelings of humanity; and he counselled them not to kill him, but to deposit him in some pit; secretly intending to deliver him from their hands, and to restore him to his father.

There is one thing worthy your attention, and which renders their conduct the more cruel and unjust, that, whatever might be the partiality of Jacob, Joseph does not appear to have assumed any thing in consequence of it, nor to have carried himself towards his brethren with insolence. For aught that appears on the sacred page, he seems ever to have treated them with the utmost affection, and to have borne his exaltation, in his father's family, with meekness.

They stripped him of his coat, and having cast him into a pit, "sat down to eat bread!" At this moment, a company of Ishmaelites passed by. And Judah said, "What *profit* is it if we slay our brother? come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites!" Who does not blush to be a partaker of human nature?—of that nature, which could coldly join the purpose of murder with satisfying the common cravings of hunger—and not only unite the sacred name of brother with the design of reducing *that* brother to the condition of a slave—but, to make the frightful picture complete, added to all the rest the insatiable claims of avarice, and consulted which method of disposing of their own "flesh" would bring them the most "*profit*!"—Surely in these

bosoms nothing human was left undestroyed!—To this vile proposal the brethren consented (one only being absent;) and they sold their brother to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. The absent brother returned in an agony from the pit whence the child was taken, and lamented his loss, with feelings worthy of him, and with a sincerity that will one day shield him from the pangs of conscience, which those unrelenting bosoms shall feel.

It now remained, that they should complete their purpose, and finish their unnatural plan, by deceiving their too confiding father, and by persuading him, that his beloved child was devoured by some wild beast. This was accordingly done. A kid was killed, and the fatal pledge of parental affection dyed in blood.

I see the venerable old man waiting at the door of his tent for the return of his beloved boy! He says to himself—‘Several hours have elapsed since he departed! he might have returned long ere now! The shadows of the evening are falling fast! He will be bewildered in his path! Why is he so long in coming? Surely he is safe!’—Now he walks a little way from the door of his tent to meet him; and his eyes, far more active than his feet, cast many a wishful, anxious look, towards Shechem. At length, a company is seen at a distance—his eager gaze impatiently examines them. ‘Yes’—he exclaims with exultation—‘they *are* my sons’—and his heart leaps for joy! As they approach, all his fears, and anxieties, return with tenfold weight upon him. In vain he runs over the whole company with his eye, in search of the object of his affection—Joseph is not with them—and they draw near to confirm, too sadly confirm, his worst apprehensions! The bloodstained robe met the distracted

sight of the wretched parent. Most probably, hypocrisy shrouded the countenance of these unnatural sons, with the borrowed mantle of seeming sorrow. Their tale of falsehood is told: the witness of their story appears in their hand; and the silence of grief, at length, gives way to the phrensy of despair.—“It is my son’s coat”—he exclaims “an evil beast hath devoured him! Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces.—And he refused to be comforted, and said, I will go down into the grave to my son mourning!”

In the mean time “Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmaelites.” Here the God of his father interfered, and was with the little Hebrew captive, and blessed his master for his sake. So conspicuously was the hand of Heaven seen in his house, and in all the concerns which he committed to his servant that this man, although a stranger to God, noticed it, and had gratitude enough to reward it; “and he left all that he had in Joseph’s hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat.”

The hour of temptation is at hand. Prosperity is generally succeeded by trial. When thy day, my young friend, is unusually serene, expect a tempest to follow. I shall draw a veil over the scene of trial to which his purity was exposed: for it would ill become us to enforce even Joseph’s piety, at the expense of a blush from the cheek of modesty. All circumstances considered, the temptation was violent; and such as none but those, who, like Joseph, have the fear of God before their eyes, could have withstood. But his arguments were strong, and unanswerable: “How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” This noble

principle shall not go unrewarded. The righteous demands of religion may for a season seem to expose us to danger: but the eye of God beholds integrity in the heart that cleaves to him, and the hand of God will recompense it.

By the tongue of falsehood, his master was prevailed upon to cast this injured and virtuous youth into prison. We pause one moment to mark here the overruling hand of Heaven. DEATH was the punishment inflicted upon those who are guilty of the crime of which he was accused; and here is the first interposition of God in reward of his innocence. Yet his lot was bitter; for he was immured in the king's prison, and "the iron entered into his soul."

Behold him reduced to the lowest ebb of fortune—"a stranger in a strange land"—shut out from liberty—denied to breathe the pure air of heaven—lying under the imputation of a detestable crime—and stripped of every thing, except that which the world's wealth cannot purchase, the testimony of a good conscience, and the presence and Spirit of God. Yet the hand of Deity is secretly working for him, both within, and without, the place of his confinement. To lighten his bondage, he now finds that favor in the eyes of the keeper of the prison, which he formerly found with Potiphar; and by the wise decisions of Providence, two of the principal servants of Pharaoh are sent to the same house of bondage." Long had they not been under the same roof with Joseph, before the visions of the Almighty visited them; and two dreams predicted the restoration of the one to favor, and the termination of the hopes and fears of the other in death. With affectionate sympathy, Joseph inquired why the cloud of grief sat heavy on their coun-

tenances; and, upon the relation of their dreams separately, he gave to each, with fidelity, their interpretation. Upon the conviction that the chief butler was about to be restored to his office; he builds a hope that, through his instrumentality, he may once more be permitted to breathe the air, and see the light of heaven at large; and the sensibility with which he describes his former situation, and his present circumstances, while he entreats his fellow-prisoner to remember him, is so natural, and so pathetic, that none but an heart of stone can read his melancholy tale without feeling. “But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me; and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house. For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon!”

Every thing took place precisely as he had predicted: “Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph: but forgot him.” Such is the friendship of the world, it is founded in interest, and dissolved for convenience. It is all promise; and he who relies upon it, will sit down in the bitterness of disappointment to deplore his folly. In the hour of affliction, when this man was a fellow-prisoner with Joseph, and was comforted by him, a transient emotion of affection for his “companion in tribulation” stirred in his bosom. Nature was not dead within him; and humanity pleaded for one so young, so kind, and so injured, as Joseph. A string of tenderness was touched in his heart: but, alas, its vibrations ceased, and it relapsed into a state of rest, so soon as the hand which struck it was withdrawn. When he was exalted to power, and restored

to prosperity, Joseph was left to pine amid all the horrors of solitary imprisonment, and to feel the pang inflicted by neglect.

At length, when hope deferred made the heart sick, the mercy of God interposed; and He, whose power is manifested to deliver in the moment of extremity procured that enlargement for Joseph, which he had entreated from the friendship of the chief butler in vain. Pharaoh had two remarkable dreams, and was troubled: his own distress, on a similar occasion, rose before the eyes of the chief butler, and recalled Joseph with all his amiable qualities to his memory. "Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day. Pharaoh was wrath with his servants, and put me inward in the captain of the guard's house, both me and the chief baker. And we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he: we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream. And there was there with us a young man, an Hebrew servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams: to each man according to his dream he did interpret. And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was: me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged."

Joseph was brought before Pharaoh, in consequence of this representation; and having heard the dreams which had agitated and perplexed the king, he interpreted them as implying seven years of plenty and seven years of famine. God had given to this young man a wisdom more precious than all the treasures of Egypt; and Pharaoh had himself enough to value and reward it, where he beheld it blended with integrity and worth. He stepped at once from a prison to a throne; and passed, from the menial office of servant to the captain of the guard,

to the second chariot, and to the second office in the kingdom. At thirty years of age, Pharaoh constituted him governor of all Egypt. All elevations are dangerous: but those which are sudden, are of all others the most perilous. Joseph needed more grace, and more strength, to preserve him in his newly-acquired dignities and honors, than to support him in his afflictions and persecutions. But he, whose hand conducted him to fame and to splendor, preserved his heart, that he was not ensnared by them. He, who made him patient in tribulation, made him also faithful in prosperity.

By the management of this extraordinary young man during the years of plenty, enough was laid up in store to supply the whole kingdom, so long as the desolating scourge of famine was shaken over Egypt, and the adjacent countries. The history of Joseph, and the circumstances of this famine, are mentioned by Justin, in his abridgment of the history of Trogus Pompeus: in which, he has blended together, as is customary in traditions, that which is true, and that which is fabulous. He ascribes the knowledge of futurity which this favorite of Heaven possessed, to the exercise of magical arts—but you shall hear him speak for himself. The following is his language, “Among his brethren, Joseph, in point of age, was the youngest; and fearing the superiority of his genius: they surprised, and secretly sold him to foreign merchants, by whom he was carried into Egypt; where he exercised magical arts with singular ability, which rendered him much beloved by the king. For he was most sagacious in the solution of prodigies; and first found out the explanation of dreams; and nothing of divine, or of human wisdom, seemed to be concealed

from him! So that he foresaw the sterility of the lands, many years before it took place; and all Egypt had perished by famine, had not the king, by his admonition, in a decree, commanded the fruits to be preserved many years. And such was his experience, that his answers seemed to be given by a God, rather than by a man.”\*—Such is the testimony of this writer.

The famine extending to the land of Canaan, the family of Jacob began to be in want. Poor old man! his sorrows thickened upon his head, at a time of life when nature demanded repose. Usually, after a stormy and rough day, in eventide there is light: but the lower his sun descended, the darker was the cloud which gathered upon it. A numerous family—age—infirmary—want—these are sad companions! What is to be done? Tidings have reached him, that there is corn in Egypt, and his sons are sent thither: but mindful of his loss, the patriarch retains Benjamin, the only pledge that remained to him of Rachel’s affection. And now is the divine prescience made manifest! This knot of ruffians, whose eye had no pity, are to feel in their turn the roughness of unkindness; and they who sported with a brother’s tears, shall see “what will become of his dreams!” I am delighted to observe their embarrassment, and their fears, while they are treated as spies—and Benjamin is required—and Simeon is bound before their faces as a pledge of their return with their younger brother: and I love to listen to the language of their guilty awakened consciences. They had slept for twenty years, and it is time they should be roused from their slumbers. “And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our broth-

\* Justin. lib. xxxv., cap. 2.

er, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us; and we would not hear: therefore is this distress come upon us!"

They left Egypt for their father's tent with heavy hearts, although they were supplied with corn for their immediate necessities; and their anxieties were not a little increased, when they found that their money was restored. But while I enjoy *their* punishment, I grieve to think how heavy all this will fall upon the head of Jacob!—As they told their tale, all the sorrows of his heart were opened anew: but when they came to require Benjamin, he could restrain his emotions no longer; and he said—"Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me! My son shall not go down with you: for his brother is dead, and he is left alone; if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave!"

But the hand of God is heavy still on the land, and the pressure of famine reduces them to the necessity of again visiting Egypt. With reluctance Israel parted with his youngest son, and Judah laid himself under the most solemn engagement to restore him to the arms of his father. This engagement was put to a severe trial! They were received more kindly than at first; and Benjamin was distinguished by the peculiar favor of the ruler of Egypt. The time of their departure came—and they commenced their journey in peace—with their number complete—and with the fairest hope to reach their home without evil, and to gladden the eyes of their father with the sight of Simeon, whom they had left bound, and of Benjamin with whom he had so reluctantly parted.

Now in order to detain them, Joseph had commanded his steward secretly to convey his cup into the sack of the youngest; and when they had left the city, he issued orders that they should be pursued, charged with the theft, and brought back to his presence. They were overtaken; and the charge was preferred against them. Secure in their innocence, they said, "Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing! Behold, the money which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold? With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen." After this declaration, what was their horror and distraction when "the cup was found in Benjamin's sack!"

In unutterable agony they are brought back into the presence of Joseph—and offer to become his servants! this offer is rejected, on principles of justice, and *he* only is required, in whose sack the cup was found. But this was all that they dreaded—and to return without *him* was worse than death! It was then that the engagement of Judah presented itself to him in all its force; and he pleaded for his brother with all the eloquence of distress, and in a language which it would be injury to imitate. "Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one: and his brother is dead, and he alone

is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die! And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. And it came to pass, when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, Go again and buy us a little food. And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down; for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother *be* with us. And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bear me two sons. And the one went out from me, and I said, surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since. And if ye take *this* also from me, and mischief befall *him*, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave! Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be *not* with us: seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die! and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave! For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever! Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad, a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father!"

O powerful nature! how irresistible is thy language! No rules of composition could produce an effect equal to this pathetic appeal to the heart! Eloquence flows along in a soft, unruffled stream, which leaves no trace on the memory over which it has passed: it charms the ear with its selection of language, but dies away with the vibrations which the tongue of the orator excites in the air: but the voice of nature leads the bosom captive; and the heart of Joseph must have been adamant had he not felt it! But he *did* feel it—and unable any longer to “refrain himself,” he ordered all his servants to leave him, while he made himself known to his brethren, and wept aloud! The scene which follows is too affecting to delineate! Language cannot describe it! The inquiries after his father, the gentle forgiveness tendered to his brethren, and his commission to Jacob—all—all, transcend human power to paint; it was the inspired penman alone who could portray them! Here, then, we shall follow the modest example of a celebrated painter, who unable to delineate the agony of a father hanging over the corpse of an only child, hid his face in the robes which veiled her lifeless remains.

Here we might pause, for a few moments, to reflect upon the wonders of Providence! Every thing predicted in the dreams of Joseph was fulfilled, and the very steps which his brethren took to prevent it, accomplished the whole. But we must bring you to the close of this history, and we could make no remarks, which are not already comprised in one text of scripture: ‘Many are the devices of a man’s heart; nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, *that* shall stand!’

Behold them once again upon their journey: but with what different feelings to the day when they left

Simeon bound behind them, and were required to bring Benjamin? Now the way seems annihilated, so swiftly do they pass, and so speedily do they reach the tent of their father. With the abruptness of joy, they tell a tale, which ought to have been delivered with caution, and by degrees:—"Joseph is yet alive! and he is governor over all the land of Egypt!"—and it is almost too much for that shattered frame—"And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not!" But "when he saw the waggons which Joseph had sent to carry him—his spirit revived: And Israel said, It is enough! Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die!"

We will not accompany him along a journey, the fatigues of which are lightened, by the anticipated pleasure of feasting his eyes once more on the countenance of his beloved child: but we cannot refrain from gratifying you, by permitting you to witness the meeting of such a father, and of such a son, after an absence of more than twenty years. "And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father to Goshen: and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck, a good while. And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, that thou art yet alive!"\*

When the first emotions of this meeting were over, and they had separately time to collect their thoughts, and to talk calmly, how much each of them would have to relate! Joseph would mark with pain, the ravages which sorrow and time had made on his father's person, and the wrinkles which they had planted in his face! Jacob would delight in retracing the resem-

\* See note 2, of this Lecture, at the end of the volume.

blance of the features of a man of forty, to those of a lad of seventeen; which was the age of Joseph when he was snatched from him! And with what mutual interest, would they listen to the alternate recital of their mutual sufferings!

But it was necessary that Jacob should be introduced to Pharaoh, whose curiosity was probably greatly excited to see the father of Joseph; and who must have been much struck with the appearance of the venerable patriarch. "And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou? And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage!"—This was not only an answer to the king's question, but an epitome of his own life!

About seventeen years of tranquillity succeeded the storms, and rendered serene the evening, of the patriarch's life—and "the time drew near that Israel must die!" His family were convened around him: and his blessings poured upon the head of Joseph; and of the sons of Joseph—and of the brethren of Joseph—with parental tenderness, and with prophetic fidelity. "And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered to his people."

This was a separation more awful and affecting than any which had yet taken place; and who does not sympathize with the pious and affectionate son, as he "mourned with a great and very sore lamentation," and as he consigned the remains of his father to repose by the dust of his family? "There they buried

Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, there he buried Leah," and in the same grave his beloved son deposited *his* body!

But to human grief there must be boundaries. The imperious claims of public, of domestic, and of private duty, called upon him to dry his tears—and he obeyed them. He continued to serve Pharaoh with fidelity—to lead up his family in the fear of God—to speak kindly to his brethren—and to nourish their little ones. And this appears to have been his unremitting employment, through the space of fifty-four years: at the close of which time, and at the age of an hundred and ten, he followed his father down into the grave; and left his bones to the charge of his brethren, to be deposited, when the providence of God should see fit, by those of his deceased family.

In concluding this interesting and pathetic history, we arrive at the close of the book of Genesis; the following remarks may not be deemed unnecessary, before this portion of the sacred writings is entirely dismissed.

1. The facts which it relates, are such as it concerns us to know, and such as an inspired communication must necessarily contain: for they are such, for the most part, as could be obtained through no other channel than revelation. Who, for instance, but a man divinely instructed, could give us an account of the creation of all things, and of the destination of man? And yet these are the first subjects after which we naturally inquire; and we expect satisfaction from a volume professedly inspired.

2. It appears that Moses is the true and sole author of this book—and for these several reasons: He is allowed to be, on the testimony of the heathens, the most ancient lawgiver: the Jews, who are governed

by these laws, acknowledge no other legislator; and when we are informed that Solon gave laws to Athens, and Lycurgus to Lacedæmon, we credit the assertion, because it is made by the nations themselves, through the medium of their historians, and all generations have, in succession, admitted their testimony; and we have the same evidence in favor of Moses. Neither, even admitting a book of this description could be forged, could it be imposed upon a whole people, without detection, by any impostor of later date than Moses himself.

3. The connexion between Genesis, and the succeeding books, is such that if this be removed, those which remain are unintelligible; and preserving it, every thing is connected and luminous: so that the book which we have just finished, must be admitted into the canon of scripture, and among the writings of Moses, or the whole of the five books expunged; and then have you wiped out the first record which Reason expects of Revelation—an account of things which necessarily extend beyond our own province, and as necessarily fall within *that* of Revelation. Besides which, the harmony of the whole volume is broken: for it proceeds throughout upon principles contained in this first book; and the authority of the scriptures, from first to last, is destroyed: for an appeal is made in every successive part of the Bible, to events which are recorded, and to facts which are stated, in Genesis.

4. The historian writes like a man convinced of the truth of that which he advances. He appeals to things at that time well known, which are now lost; and it is easy to conceive how the several facts which he relates were transmitted to him. Admitting that he could impose upon *us*, and upon succeeding generations, who will be still more removed from the era of

his facts, and the scene of transactions which he has stated, he could not have imposed upon those with whom he lived, and who were themselves by tradition well acquainted with the facts which he relates. Should any man be disposed, after all that has been said, to determine that the whole is a fable, before he finally draws his conclusions, we intreat him once more to read over the history of Joseph, in all its native simplicity, as recorded in the Bible, and we would be satisfied to rest our argument upon this alone: we think that no one could for a moment imagine that it is a fiction: we would even venture to appeal to skepticism itself to determine, whether any thing could so affect the heart, short of truth and nature.

5. The difference of style between the book of Genesis, and those which succeed, which some have alleged as an evidence that they had not the same author, may be accounted for on this principle: that in *this* he records things which took place before he was born; in *those*, he relates the transactions of his own day, to which he was an eye-witness. Those who have supposed, that if Moses had been the author of this part of the Bible, he would not have spoken of himself in the third person, appear to us to have pointed out one of his principal beauties, and to have confirmed his general character: for egotism would have ill become "the meekest of men"——

—But it is time that we retire to our respective habitations, for meditation and prayer.

## LECTURE VII.

### INTERMEDIATE LECTURE.

A SCRIPTURAL REPRESENTATION OF THE NATURE AND DESTINATION OF MAN.

GEN. II, 7.

*And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*

JOB XXXII, 8.

*There is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.*

WHY does my heart beat with pulsations of rapture, when my eye measures yonder heavens, or glides over hills and vallies along the surface of this beautiful world? When the dew sparkles upon the ground, a kindred tear glitters upon my countenance: but it is not the tear of sorrow; it springs from a well of unspeakable pleasure which I feel flowing within my bosom! Is it merely the softness, or the grandeur, of the scenery by which I am surrounded, that affects me? No! but my spirit meets a Parent walking invisibly on the globe that he formed, and working manifestly on my right hand and on my left. All these lovely objects are the productions of his skill, the result of his wisdom, the tokens of his benevolence, the imperfect images of his greatness. Every thing demonstrates the being and perfections of Deity. I see him em-purpling the east before the sun in the morning, and

wheeling the orb on which I live round upon its axis. I behold him throwing the mantle of darkness over me in the evening, and kindling the skies into radiance by unveiling suns and worlds without number and without end. I gather a flower, and am revived by its fragrance; I see shade melting into shade infinitely above any combination of colors, which art can produce. To aid the organ of vision, I inspect through the microscope, an insect: I see it painted into a thousand brilliances, and displaying a thousand beauties, imperceptible to the naked eye. I stand convinced that no mortal pencil could delineate the loveliness of its form. I perceive a grain of corn peeping above the earth. It scarcely rears its light green head over the ground. I visit it day after day, and month after month. It gradually increases. It is an inch—it is a foot in height. Now it assumes a new shape. It vegetates afresh. The ear begins to form—to expand—to fill. Now it has attained its growth—it ripens—it is matured. I have narrowly watched the progress of vegetation; and have seen its advancement. I beheld every day adding something to its height, and to its perfection: but the hand which raised it from “the blade to the ear, and to the full corn in the ear,” escaped my researches. I find a crysalis, and watch the secret movements of nature. The insect is shrouded in a living tomb. It begins to stir—it increases in strength—and the butterfly breaks from its confinement. Meeting with ten thousand such wonderful productions every day—I recognise in them the great Spirit that animates all created nature, and I am compelled to acknowledge, “O Lord our Governor! how excellent is thy name in all the earth; and thou hast set thy glory above the heavens.”

I pass on to the animal creation. There I perceive other operations, and am overwhelmed with new wonders. The principle on which they act, and which is termed instinct, is the gift of God; and it appears to differ from the immortal principle in man, in its confinement to a certain inferior standard, and in its direction to one particular pursuit, adapted to the peculiar nature and exigences of its possessor. I see the timid acquiring courage while they have a maternal part to perform; and, forgetting to measure the disproportion between their own strength and *that* of their antagonist, boldly assaulting those superior animals, which designedly or unintentionally, disturb the repose of their young. Their instinct enables them to perform those things to which it is particularly adapted, with more order and facility than man, with his superior understanding, can accomplish; and, with the simple tools of nature, they effect *that* which the complex machinery of art cannot produce. All that animate creation, from the elephant, and “that great leviathan,” among animals, to the bee, and the ant, among insects, still conduct us to the invisible God; and we say, “The earth is full of thy riches; so is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all.”

But all these are far inferior to man. He blends in his own person, the nature and properties of all. He has the vegetation of the plant—for his limbs expand and grow; and he combines with it the properties of the animal—for he lives and moves: he possesses also their distinguishing principle of action, instinct—for his eye closes self instructed against the fly which blindly rushes upon it, on a summer’s evening. But he has a

superior principle; and here is he in truth the Lord of Creation. "There is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding." These words well express the substance of the Lecture proposed for this evening: the subject of which is

#### A SCRIPTURAL REPRESENTATION OF THE NATURE AND DESTINATION OF MAN.

While Elihu declares what man is, Moses leads us back to the contemplation of what he was; and both develope how he came to be what he is. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." The combined testimonies of these scriptures require us to declare the NATURAL DIGNITY of man, and to unveil THE SOURCE of his greatness; and from each of these considerations some REFLECTIONS will arise, important to us, as intelligent, responsible beings.

The passages we have selected convey a forcible description of

##### 1. THE NATURAL DIGNITY OF MAN.

"There is a spirit in man"—"Man became a living soul." And

1. WHAT IS SPIRIT? Every inquiry into the nature, power and phenomena of mind—every search into its union to matter, its mode of operation, its dependance, or the contrary, upon this exterior vehicle and instrument of its volitions—every question agitated respecting its modes of existence, and their several relations—is interesting and important. But these inquiries should be made with humility, these researches pursued with caution, these questions agitated with diffi-

dence, and the several conclusions which we deduce in support of any favorite hypothesis, should be inferred and maintained in a spirit totally opposite to dogmatism: since, such is our uncertainty after the most laborious investigations, and our darkness in defiance of the lights which Revelation and philosophy have respectively furnished, that little more than conjecture can be obtained after all; and while the pride of man on the wing for information, aspires to nothing less than *demonstration*, his reason, fatigued with her daring flight into regions so unexplored, is compelled, for the most part, to sit down at the lowest stage of evidence—*probability*.

Our object is not to render this Lecture a mere philosophical essay, but simply and seriously to inquire what we are, and to what we are destined. We shall not attempt to enter far into that, which has been the mystery of every age: but shall be satisfied with proving the position laid down, that “there is a spirit in man.”—We shall describe some of the more obvious properties of mind, in answering the inquiry, “what is spirit?” without laboring to “darken counsel by words without knowledge,” in attempting a solution of *that*, which in this world can never satisfactorily be solved.

I feel within me a principle superior to the tabernacle which it inhabits. I mark a similar principle in my brethren of mankind: at least I see them affected in the same way, and I conclude that they are agitated from the same causes. I discern these impressions in a child but faintly: they wax stronger and stronger; they grow with his growth, strengthen with his vigor, and increase with his age. I discover impressions on the animal creation resembling these: but they are limited; they act always in the same way;

in *me*, they are illimitable; they assume a thousand different shapes; and they are confined to no certain standard. I conclude that "there is a spirit in man." But this spirit is not to be defined; and is best understood by the effects that it produces.—Let us therefore inquire,

2. WHAT ARE ITS OPERATIONS? On all occasions it compares, it combines, it reasons, it judges. Whenever a subject is presented, it considers its parts, compares its probabilities and the contrary, and forms its decisions upon the preponderance of the one or the other. I see my friend; and the sound of his voice communicates joy to my bosom; its tones vibrate upon my heart, as well as upon my ear. The blood circulates along my veins with greater rapidity. Pleasure dilates all my powers, and the feelings of my heart rush to my eyes. I read the same emotions in his countenance. I see the same rapture thrilling through his frame. It is the mingling of kindred spirits. Sometimes the communication is made through the medium of the eye, and his hand-writing imparts the same pleasurable sensations as the tones of his voice: but it is still the spirit that speaks within me. He dies—and all is changed! The face of nature seems no more lovely. The vicissitudes of seasons charm me no longer. My bosom is oppressed; and as I stand over the grave of my departed comforts, my sorrows force their way to my eyes, and my tears fall upon the unconscious dust. I wander, in an agony of grief, over his deserted habitation. Time, which mellows my afflictions, is unable to remove it altogether, and it melts only into the softer shade of melancholy. The sun shines, and the seasons return, since his departure as before: but they are not the same to me! Whence is

is this change? or why these emotions and passions at all?—"There is a spirit in man!"

When I raise my hand, it is in consequence of an impulse of my mind; and when I walk out, my will determines the road which I shall take: but if there were "no spirit in man," there could be no will to determine, and when that spirit is removed, the body sinks into a state of rest. Year after year, I lose my connexions: but the bond of our union is indissoluble even by death. Memory uncovers the grave, and the form of those whom I loved, rises perfect before me. I meet them in the room which they occupied; and the ground on which they trod becomes holy. As the man sinks into the vale of years, the scenes of his former days recur, in all the vivid colors in which they were presented to him in the days of his youth. He well recollects the house in which his childhood was passed; and the field over which he strolled in quest of the wild flower, or in pursuit of the insect; and as he reviews these early enjoyments, he seems to live them over again. This is another of the operations of the mind; and it furnishes another evidence that "there is a spirit in man."

The radiance of yonder orb scarcely reaches the man. Science discovers that it is a sun, or a planet; and imagination pursues the thought. He roves through the fields of infinite space, and without quitting the globe which he inhabits, strays beyond the vast confines of the creation, presses into the invisible worlds, enters the "heaven of heavens," and loses himself before the throne of God.

He sleeps—"but his heart waketh." The body requires repose; but the mind, ever active and awake, wanders unfettered through all the labyrinths of fancy.

It converses with departed spirits: it is recalled only by the light of the morning chasing its visions. Whence is all this? These operations, from what source do they flow? This understanding—these passions—this memory—this imagination—these dreams—what is the spring of them all? “There is a spirit in man!”

But when the body grows cold—and its members are stiff and motionless—the spirit is withdrawn. The clay tabernacle is reduced to its original dust: but respecting the mind a new question suggests itself:—

3. WHAT IS ITS SEPARATE STATE? While our dearest friends are dying around us, and we ourselves shiver on the brink of eternity, this is no unimportant inquiry. We understand, however, so little of spirit in its union with matter, that our researches into its state of separation must be very confined; and we are acquainted in so small a measure with its modes of existence in this world, that we are not to expect very extensive information of those in which it shall exist in futurity. We cannot doubt the fact that it *can* exist separate from the body, when we consider some phenomena in its present state. When the powers of the body are suspended in sleep, those of the mind are in action; and when the eye is closed, the spirit in dreams, sees without the aid of that organ. A separate state of existence for the spirit, when it has left the body, is not impossible; and it appears to us that the tenor of the scriptures is against the soul-sleeping scheme. In vain did Paul wish “to depart,” in order to “be with Christ,” if the soul sleep with the body till the resurrection of the dead; since he would not be nearer the accomplishment of his wish in dying, than he was while he yet lived: nor, if this hypothesis be true, is he nearer to it now, than he would have been, had he

lived to the present hour. Neither indeed is he so near the attainment of his desire now, as he was during his life: for while he lived he enjoyed divine communications; but being dead, if the spirit sleep with the body, even those communications which he did enjoy are cut off—and all intercourse with the Deity is suspended in long oblivion till the morning of the resurrection. For Jesus says, “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living:” Yet said he to Moses —“I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,”—three hundred years after their dust had been consigned to the cave of the field of Machpelah. The inference we deduce is, that their spirits exist in a separate state, while their bodies sleep in the grave.

This state is revealed in the scriptures as a state of happiness or misery; and it is not impossible for the spirit to suffer and enjoy independently of the body; and by consequence in a state separate from it. Observe yonder man suffering even to agony. What horror is painted on his countenance! What distraction looks through his eye! What groans burst from his bosom! From what does his anguish arise? His body is in health: no disease wastes him; no illness shatters his frame. Ah! it is an inward sorrow that devours him—an inward sickness that consumes him! “The arrows of the Almighty are within him, the poison whereof drinketh up his spirit.” It is conscience that suffers: it is the spirit that is sick!—And oh, how sharper than all external calamity is this disease of the mind! “The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity: but a wounded spirit—who can bear?” He, who can thus afflict the spirit when the body is in health, and cause it to suffer independently of the body—can fill it with unspeakable anguish in

a state of separation from the body, and, by a parity of reasoning, cause it to enjoy the most exquisite happiness. The assertion of the text appears now to be established—"there is a spirit in man." A spirit, such as we have described, must in the nature of things be immortal. And the happiness or misery of this spirit in a future state, one might rationally conclude, even did not the scriptures positively affirm it, must be commensurate with its existence. But what shall be the modes of its being in a separate and eternal state, as we are so partially acquainted with them in its present union with the body, we must die to learn. One thing is clear—man is "a living soul;" and the Bible furnishes us with the most rational and valuable account of his natural dignity—and of his future destination. By this Revelation we are made acquainted with

## II. THE SOURCE OF HIS GREATNESS.

"The Lord God—breathed into his nostrils the breath of life:" "the inspiration of the Almighty—giveth him understanding." The amount of these declarations, and of the combined testimony of the scriptures, seems to be comprised in the following arrangement.

1. "IN HIM WE LIVE, AND MOVE, AND HAVE OUR BEING." This is the leading sentiment of the Bible, and it is strictly reasonable. It was not more immediately the work of God to create the man at the first, than it is to give life to every individual that is born into the world. He organizes the human frame; and bestows the adaption of its several parts to the purposes for which they were designed. A wondrous piece of machinery, secret in its most important oper-

ations, and unsearchable in the finer parts of its construction! Internally, how complicated! how harmonious! A thousand springs act upon each other—a thousand fibres are necessary to life, which escape the eye of scrutiny. To guard these, what care, what wisdom, are displayed! In the whole machine, what compactness! what strength! Externally, what uniformity! and yet what variety! What grace, what beauty, what perfection! The spring of all this is life! The several parts of the machine we are able to take in pieces, and to comprehend their operations: but this secret spring—life—altogether escapes us. We see not the hand that takes it away; we know not the moment when it was first given. Watch as narrowly as you please, the precise instant of either will remain undiscovered. The child comes into the world possessing this principle, and announcing its existence, and the sensibility connected with it, by tears! The last pulsation of the heart ceases, ere we are aware of the spirit's departure. The closest observer of the communication and of the cessation of life, can only say, in relation to the first, "It is there!"—to the last—"it is withdrawn!"—An invisible hand forms the body, animates it with spirit, expands the limbs, fixes the standard of stature, and sets bounds to the stream of human existence. He confines it now to eighty years, as formerly he extended it to nine centuries. Who will not say—"I will praise thee," O God, "for I am fearfully and wonderfully made?—Marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, which

in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them!" By the "inspiration of the Almighty" we are what we are, in relation to natural life, which is given, withheld, limited, and extinguished, at his pleasure.

2. "THE INSPIRATION OF THE ALMIGHTY GIVETH US UNDERSTANDING." The dawn of reason at the first is lighted up in the mind of a child by a Divine hand. He causes it to brighten, as the limbs enlarge their size, and acquire vigor. He leads the powers of the mind to perfection, and fixes their standard. He makes all the difference which we perceive subsisting between man and man. He distributes, according to his pleasure, to some *one*—to others, *ten* talents; and he proportions their responsibility to each respectively. The spirit which in this world seems unconfined, and which roves at large, with growing delight, through all the works of God; and that which is barely sufficient to carry its possessor through life, came from the same hand; and however different in their capacities, are equally immortal. Through a thousand invisible channels, the Father of Spirits visits our spirit; and it is in vain that we desire to trace the modes of his communications to his creatures. "God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed: then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction."

He touches the nerve of the brain, and the understanding seems to be lost. The spirit doubtless is perfect: but the instrument upon which she operated, the vehicle of her impulses, the fibre upon which she struck, is deranged and impaired. We are presented with that melancholy union, the stature of a man and the

ignorance of a child! All is mystery. A mind little inferior to what we conceive of angelic powers, is destroyed by the resistless force of its own imagination; and reason is subdued by the uncontrolled power of fancy. Like a majestic building raised upon too lofty a scale, it sinks under its own pressure—and from the very grandeur of the design becomes an heap of ruins. Like a bright meteor, shines the blaze of genius for a season; but, from some unknown cause, it is precipitated from its exalted sphere in a moment, and the ray of intellect which illumined the world—expires. We deplore in vain the ruins of that beautiful fabric, the human mind; and with anguish of spirit we discern the light of the understanding extinguished. But we are not ignorant of the hand which quenches it. It is the same that kindled it at the first. These are the mysterious transactions of the Fountain of Life: “For there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding.”

3. SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE IS THE GIFT OF GOD. We too frequently see men of distinguished talents, most deplorably ignorant in that knowledge, which of itself is able to counterbalance the want of all others; and without which, all science is less than nothing. We stand astonished, and look upon the man as something more than mortal. What admirable powers of intellect! What a capacious understanding! What greatness of soul! What genius! What acquirements! What intelligence! What pity is it the picture is not finished! But the noble outline wants filling up by moral worth; and wanting that, it wants every thing. Alas! “one thing is needful”—and the lack of that *one* thing, destroys the worth of all! Without this, that godlike capacity is degraded: those superior powers

are abused. They are mischievous rather than useful. They are ruinous to their possessor, and injurious to society. They are turned against HIM who bestowed them. They are wasted in wanton profusion; but they are followed by a dreadful responsibility. If it should please God to kindle a ray of spiritual light in that mind, what might not such a man, in the right employment of such distinguished talents, perform! But in the mean time our position is established—that spiritual knowledge is the gift of God. “A man can receive nothing except it be given him from above.” We are naturally ignorant in all spiritual concerns. Still worse than this, every power of our mind is directed against divine knowledge. “This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, but men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.” He, who leads the morning stars, and kindled the radiance of the sun; He, who “in the beginning,” said, “‘Let there be light,’ and there was light;” He, who bestows natural and intellectual life upon the man; He it is, who pours spiritual knowledge into the mind, and to Him is it ascribed in the scriptures. “There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding.”

4. THE FUTURE EXISTENCE OF THE SPIRIT WILL FLOW FROM GOD. Leaving this world, our prospects are unbounded. The word of God draws aside the veil, and transports us to the foot of the eternal throne. The eye of faith numbers the different orders of glorious spirits which bend before the Deity. First, the various ranks of those pure Intelligences, those mysterious Beings, who never sinned, pass before the eye of the mind. These evermore cry, “Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty”—and hide their faces before un-

created Excellence. And these derive their existence, and their powers from Him, before whom they do homage. Then, the myriads of the Redeemed pass along before us, divided into their companies, and possessing their respective degrees of glory: but it is "a great multitude which no man can number." Patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, lead the way: the noble army of martyrs follows: the general assembly and church of the firstborn, the spirits of the just made perfect, from Adam to the last spirit that fled from this vale of tears, are in this illustrious crowd, each of them clothed in righteousness, and bearing the emblem of victory in his hand. And these all live upon the "Fountain of Life"---all derive their superior intelligence from the "Father of Lights." "The inspiration of the Almighty giveth *them* understanding." We have contemplated the natural dignity of man, and uncovered the source of his greatness; from all that has been said, his destination may be prejudged; and indeed it has been interwoven throughout the texture of the whole of this Lecture: we may keep it in view also, in setting before you

### III. SOME REFLECTIONS ARISING OUT OF THIS SUBJECT.

Is there "a spirit in man?"

1. HOW HIGH IS ITS DESTINATION! It was not designed to be immured in these walls of flesh for ever. The harps of angels invite us to our rest. Departed saints attract us forwards. The voice of God himself calls us home. It is the combined testimony of the scriptures, of reason, of conscience, that this immaterial principle is destined for the enjoyment of God for ever. He who buries his expectations here forgets his dignity. Like his divine Lord, the Christian pas-

ses through this world in the shape of a servant; in the world of spirits, he shall appear in all the majesty of an heir of glory. Yonder sun shall be extinguished; those stars shall fade; the beauties of creation shall be blotted out; the trump of God shall announce the dissolution of nature; the heavens shall be wrapped together as a scroll; all shall be consumed; all shall be destroyed; the whole globe shall be a mass of ruins; but at that instant the concealing curtain shall fall; the new creation shall burst upon the enraptured sight; the redeemed spirit shall be put in possession of its everlasting habitation; and the man shall enjoy God for ever. Such is his high destination.

Does "the inspiration of the Almighty give us understanding?"

2. HOW OUGHT THE POWERS OF THE SPIRIT TO BE DEVOTED TO HIM! Shall I deem his service a drudgery, who made me what I am? who requires in return only that I should fear him, and love him? and who in order to induce me to obey his commands, assumes and exercises the most tender of characters and of relations? O, ungrateful that I am! shall I deem the gentle requisitions of a father; the claims of an elder brother, founded equally in justice and in kindness; the expectations of a friend—an hardship? Impossible! No—had he demanded the unceasing tribute of my spirit; had he marked out every moment of my life; as a season of worship; I ought not, even then, to have deemed it an hard service! Did he not bestow those powers? Has he not a right to do that which he will with his own? Does he ask more than he gave? Did not Jesus die to save that spirit? Surely his commandments are not grievous: but "his yoke is easy, and his burden is light." And are there any who live

day after day without bowing their knee to God? Are there any who live in the neglect of secret prayer, upon whom he has bestowed an immortal spirit—perhaps distinguished talents? How are they to be pitied! the voice of joy from nature reproaches them—the voice of conscience from within reproaches them—the voice of the scriptures reproaches them: for it says—and reason seconds its injunctions—“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength.”

Is there “a spirit in man?”

3. How VAST IS ITS LOSS! I shudder to paint the lightest shades of this horrible picture. To die an enemy to God, is to have all the powers and capacities of the mind blotted out—I correct myself—*not* blotted out, but continued, and enlarged, only to increase the agony of their miserable possessor. The tortures of futurity will be augmented by the bitterness of reflection and of self-reproach. The memory will be tenacious of all the scenes of the past life—and strong to recall the opportunities which were neglected, the time which was wasted, the ordinances which were despised, the salvation which was proffered, and which is now for ever hid from their eyes! What a dagger to the heart is the reflection, “I have done all this! my own hand has pulled down ruin upon my head; my own hand has extinguished the ray of hope for ever: my own hand has fixed the eternal bars of this ever-during dungeon!” Is it not enough that now, when the spirit is wounded by the arrows of the Almighty, the accusations of conscience torture the bosom beyond the utmost stretch of thought, but will you tempt the worst, and dare the arm of Omnipotent vengeance to strike, and “to cast body and soul into hell?” Is it not

enough that the groans from that prison reach our ears? and that, through the medium of scripture, their language is conveyed to us? while they cry in ceaseless despair—"Oh! how have we hated instruction, and our heart despised reproof; and now we eat of the fruit of our own way, and are filled with our own devices; now he laugheth at our calamity, and mocketh, seeing our fear is come as desolation, and our destruction as a whirlwind!" Will not these mournful shrieks arrest your attention, and shake your purpose, ye thoughtless and profane! but will you rush headlong to the same ruin? and do you with desperate rashness demand to be "tormented in this flame?" Yet pause one moment—are you prepared to endure the worst? Have you asked yourselves the question which Isaiah puts into the mouth of the sinners and hypocrites in Zion, "Who amongst us shall dwell with devouring fire? Who amongst us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" Before you risk your spirit for the fleeting allurements of time, and sacrifice your eternal interests to the gratifications of this transient life, consider how vast is its loss! Before you quite make up your minds that these things are "cunningly devised fables," calculate your damage, should all this prove at length a tremendous reality!

Is "there a spirit in man?"

4. **HOW DILIGENTLY OUGHT IT TO BE CULTIVATED!** It is the happiness of man, that he has the power of increasing his talents, and enlarging the sphere of intellect, by diligence and by application. To the human spirit no boundaries can be prescribed. Has God given thee, O young man, extensive powers? Do not diminish them by sloth: do not destroy them by intemperance: do not waste them in wanton expendi-

ture: do not direct them to purposes offensive to God, injurious to society, and, in the event, destructive to thyself. Keep them as the sacred deposit of God. Hide not thy talent in a napkin. Bring it forwards for the service of religion, of humanity, and of reason. It will increase by use; and the approbation of God shall be thy reward.

Brethren, "now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He, who is our life, shall appear, we shall be made like him: for we shall see him as he is, and appear with him in glory." The present state of the spirit, in its highest perfection of natural and religious culture, is nothing to the "glory that shall be revealed." But the time presses on, when bending before the throne of God, it shall blaze forth, in the full perfection of its beauty and immortality.

Such is the scriptural account of the nature and destination of man; and we now make our appeal to you, whether it is not rational and animating. It sanctions all that experience teaches us respecting the natural powers of the mind. It leads us up in grateful remembrance to him, who bestowed the principle of life, at the first, and who continues to impart it through all successive generations. It enhances its value by asserting and proving its immortality. - It renders the man useful to society, in cherishing the love of goodness, and in superinducing hatred to vice, by unveiling the future destination of the spirit to eternal happiness as the free reward of piety, or eternal misery as the just judgment of sin; and thus furnishes a more powerful guard of virtue, and barrier against vice, than all the laws of society could impose and preserve.

He, then, that is an enemy to Revelation, is an enemy to HIMSELF. He that opposes religion, opposes his best interests. He is extinguishing, so far as he can extinguish, the light which is set to guide him home; and to absorb the feeble, inefficient ray of reason and of nature. He is refusing the only cup of consolation put into his hand to counteract the bitter draught of sorrow. He is rolling a great stone over the mouth of his own sepulchre, and sealing it with his own seal, and making it as sure as he can in the hope (if annihilation *can* be a subject of hope to the human bosom!) that he shall sleep there for ever: but he shall find, to his utter dismay, that the angel of the Lord can roll away the stone, and that the mandate of heaven will rouse his slumbering dust. He is the enemy of MANKIND. For he is robbing society of the cement which holds it together: of the light which has illumined these latter days: of the source of its intelligence, of its happiness, of its consolations, of its best principles. And he who is the enemy of man, is the enemy of God; for HE is the Parent of the universe: the Friend of man; HE stamped human nature with his own image, and he loves it still.

There is but one principle on which we can account for the hatred of the world against revelation; and that is—this very revelation asserted from the first, “the carnal mind is enmity against God, it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” And the very persecutions it has endured, are evidences of its authenticity: the very existence of skepticism, so far as it goes, is an unanswerable argument against infidelity—because it was foretold and accounted for, by the Bible itself, at the very moment of its promulgation.

One should have imagined that the gospel of Jesus, could have had no enemies. It breathes only peace. It has but one object—to promote the felicity of mankind. It sweetens every connexion of human life. It strengthens the cause of philanthropy. The only favor it entreats is, that men would love themselves; and while it pours a thousand blessings on the present transient existence, and lightens all the trials of the way, it shews wretched, erring man, “the path of life.” And yet every man’s hand is lifted up against it! From its birth to the present hour, every age has blended all its wisdom and all its force; to crush Christianity. Had it required the man to sacrifice “his first born for his transgression, the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul”—who would have wondered that nature should rise up against it?—Yet strange to say—the horrible religion of the gentiles, which actually did require this unnatural offering, was supported, and defended against Christianity, with vehement obstinacy. The rage of man, on the one side, exhausted itself in defence of altars on which their children had been immolated; and on the other, was directed against a religion which hastened to overthrow these blood-stained altars, and which said, “Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven!”—Had it destroyed the peace and existence of society: had it scattered war and bloodshed over the earth: had it trampled on the dearest rights of human nature—why then, some reason might be given for the wrath of man against it. But it disseminates “peace and good will to man,” abroad upon earth, while it brings in a revenue of “glory to God.” We can take its most furious persecutor by the hand, when he raves, “Away with it from the earth!” and say, “Why?

What evil hath it done?" And he shall be unable to assign a single reason for his conduct: unable to lay one sin to its charge: unable to prove that in any one instance it is injurious to society: unable to deny, that it has been productive of the most beneficial effects—that it has removed all the clouds of heathenism—that it has extinguished the fires through which wretched parents caused their children to pass, and in which the fruit of their body was consumed—that it has given to the world a new and perfect code of morality—that it has thrown open the gates of mortality—that it has removed the bitterness of death—and that it has established, solely and unaided, the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead: he shall be compelled to admit all this, and yet, without a single reason, merely from his natural enmity to it, he will continue to despise, to reject, and to persecute it! Humanity is concerned in the progress of this religion: Humanity raises her voice in favor of revelation, and entreats, "Rise up, Lord, let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee, flee before thee!"

## LECTURE VIII.

### THE SLAVERY AND DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL IN EGYPT.

GEN. XV, 13, 14.

*And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not their's, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years. And also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.*

ACTS VII, 35, 36.

*This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler, and a deliverer, by the hands of the angel which appeared to him in the bush. He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years.*

THERE is a mournful pleasure in recalling the words, and reviewing the feelings, of those who are gone before; and whose lot in this world, like our own, was mingled in almost equal proportions of good and evil. Time has effected changes, by his slow devastations, which speak to the heart; and we cannot hear the voice of years departed, without feeling our attention arrested, and amid the suspension of our employments, giving reverence to the testimony of those, whose wisdom, snatched from that all-destroying hand, remains

upon record, for our instruction. We open this volume, and are surrounded by scenes now blotted out from the face of nature: by actors who have performed their parts, and have vanished out of our sight. Here we see Babylon rearing her majestic head, in awful dignity, over the plains extended on every side. We shut the book, and the mighty empire disappears—"Babylon the great, is fallen! is fallen!" Oblivion has spread an impenetrable mist over the spot on which this queen of the nations stood, and we look in vain for some traces of her former greatness. In the Bible we are introduced to Jerusalem in all her glory. We see the tabernacle of God lifting its hallowed curtains on the summit of Mount Zion. We hear the voice of the "sweet singer of Israel" rising amid the devotions of that dispensation, and his words are chanted to the harmony of a thousand stringed instruments. We withdraw our eyes from the sacred page, and imagination loses her power, the visions which the pleasing enchantress painted before us, vanish; and we see the shadows flit away, with regret. But *all* is not delusion—the words which we hear—the experience of the persons whose lives we study—the precepts which were given them, and which still remain upon record—are engraven upon our hearts in characters never to be obliterated.

Customs change with years. Yet is man in the present day, what he was in ages that are passed: only he was surrounded by different scenes, he was led by different habits. His peculiar situation, his local circumstances, exist no longer: but he had the same principles common to human nature, the same feelings, the same necessities, the same expectations. Our fathers felt, like ourselves, the pleasures of hope, the

anguish of disappointment, the pantings of suspense, the throbbings of joy, the pangs of fear. They lived uncertain of the future. They trembled as they approached the brink of time. The world which they now inhabit, and the mysteries of which are now laid open to them, was once as secret, and as much an object of the mingled emotions of apprehension and of hope, to them as to us. There were moments when their faith was not in lively exercise, and when the fear of death was as powerfully felt in their bosoms as in our own. Then they fled to this word for support, and derived from it the sweetest consolation. Yes—and we are hastening to be what they are. After a few years, we shall join their society. We are floating down the same stream, over which their vessels have already passed: borne along by the same current, we sail between the same winding banks, pass through the same straits, meet with the same rocks and quicksands, and are agitated by the same tempests: but they have safely anchored in the haven, and we are stretching all our canvass to make the same point of destination, that, with them, we may be sheltered from the storm, for ever! We avail ourselves of the directions which they had left behind them, because in all ages “the Author and Finisher of our faith” is the same. He will be to future generations, what he was to them, what he is to us. When our posterity shall trample upon our dust, when our very names shall have perished from the record of time, when new faces shall appear on this wide and busy scene of action, the name of God will remain to our children, the same as it appears this night to us, the same as it was announced to Moses from the bush which burned with fire and was not consumed—“I AM THAT I AM!”

The channels of a man's information are confined to the *past* and to the *present*. He travels with a mist perpetually before his eyes: but when he looks back—the road which he has already trodden is clearly discernible: no vapor hovers over it: it is visible in all its parts, except those very remote portions of it which have dwindled into the obscurity of prolonged perspective. The faithful and impartial record of the inspired pages, causes the earliest periods of time to roll back for the instruction of these latter days. In a moment we feel ourselves transported into the garden of God, and hear his voice whispering amid the trees of Paradise in the cool of the day. We accompany the patriarch from his country and his father's house: we traverse with him, conducted by an invisible hand, the land, in the "length thereof, and in the breadth thereof:" we rest wherever he pitches his tent: we participate his domestic joys and sorrows; and at length we follow him to his long home, and see his body deposited in the grave, there to slumber "until the times of the restitution of all things." We are hurried into the camps of the Alexanders and Cæsars of the day: we visit their tents, and listen to their projects to disturb the repose of mankind: we perceive these designs carried into effect, just so far as the wisdom of Providence permits, and no farther: and we see these destroyers of the order and harmony of society, sinking one after another into the dust and the silence of death. History snatches from the hand of time, all that is valuable and useful. By her magic pencil the departed visions of ancient days return, and the fathers pass and repass before our eyes, that we may see, and admire, and imitate their excellencies: that we may abhor and avoid their vices: that we may pity and escape their

weaknesses: that our understandings may be enlightened, our judgments established in the truth, and our minds conducted through the lowly and peaceful paths of religion to the eternal temple of God.

And we derive information from the sources of *present* knowledge, and from the teachings of *present* experience. Every day adds something to the intellectual stature of an intelligent man: every day develops something important and interesting. The moment reason dawns upon the mind, the man finds himself surrounded by beings occupying the same rank with himself in the scale of creation: he feels his destiny and his happiness inseparably linked with theirs; and he awakes to a sense of new duties, involving in them a correspondent responsibility. He can no longer deem himself an idle spectator of the bustle and activity around him. Every day something transpires which affects his interests and his peace: or the interest and the peace of those whom he loves; and he is drawn from his solitude in spite of himself—he is roused into exertion in defiance of his preference for inactivity. He is soon involved in a thousand perplexities. He calls in the assistance of his contemporaries, that he may avail himself of the aid of their observations, in connexion with his own, to learn something of the road which they are mutually travelling; and that by their combined exertions they may more successfully combat, and more effectually subdue, the temptations by which they are mutually assaulted. We are justified then, my friends, in trying every source of information which God permits to us—and not only in availing ourselves of present experience, but in plundering, as at this time, the past of its treasures.

But we know nothing of *futurity*. God has reserved to himself the knowledge of that which shall be: and he conceals it from the highest orders of his intelligent creation.

Chain'd to his throne a volume lies,  
With all the fates of men:  
With ev'ry angel's form and size  
Drawn by th' eternal pen.

His providence unfolds the book,  
And makes his counsels shine;  
Each opening leaf, and ev'ry stroke,  
Fulfils some deep design.

Here he exalts neglected worms  
To sceptres and a crown:  
Anon the following page he turns,  
And treads the monarch down.

Nor Gabriel asks the reason why,  
Nor God the reason gives;  
Nor dares the favorite angel pry  
Between the folded leaves!\*

We may go back to the creation of the world, but we know not what shall be on the morrow. He alone knoweth the end from the beginning; and we shall have occasion to notice a most decisive evidence of this foreknowledge, in the prediction with which we commenced this Lecture respecting the subject of the present discussion, and which was delivered four hundred years before the event to which it relates was accomplished.

The book of *Exodus* commences with a recital, by name, of the eleven patriarchs, who accompanied their father into *EGYPT*, God having sent Joseph before them, to provide for them, and to nourish their little ones. With conciseness characteristic of the sacred writings, Moses sums up the number of the family

of Jacob, sweeps off that generation, exhibits the increasing population of their descendants, and hastens to

THE SLAVERY AND DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL IN EGYPT: which part of his narration is to occupy your attention at this time. We shall, as usual, simply detail the facts as they are recorded by Moses, and corroborate them by foreign testimonies. Let us

#### I. DETAIL THE FACTS AS THEY ARE RECORDED BY MOSES.

In discovering the sources of the slavery and sufferings of the Israelites, we are naturally led to contemplate the wonderful changes effected by the lapse of a few years. Nor shall we find it difficult to persuade those, of the truth and fidelity of the sacred historian's representations on this point, who have accustomed themselves to mark the vicissitudes around them, caused by the revolution of a few months, not to say years. What changes are effected in *one* year! When we separate, who can say whether we shall see each other's faces in the flesh again? We meet at the house of friendship—we behold the father of a family happy and exulting. The bloom of health blushes in the cheek of his children. The partner of his life enjoys unusual vivacity. We return—but grief spreads her shadow over his countenance. In the intermediate space of a few weeks, the spoiler, death, has robbed him of his wife, or of some of his children: or perhaps we find the mother a widow, and the children fatherless. A man who travels along the vale of years, finds himself deserted by his contemporaries, and passes through the most gloomy part of his way, while the evening sun sets upon him, alone. Some have left him from mutability of disposition: some are divided from

him by distance: some have been separated from his interests, by forming new connexions, some have been driven from his embraces by the envenomed tongue of calumny: some have gone before him into the land of spirits. And thus the sons of Jacob sunk one after another into the grave, till Egypt was covered with a new generation, mutually strange to each other.

How much is suspended upon the life of an individual! What an object of weakness, what a broken reed, is that individual sinking into the arms of death! How soon his services are forgotten, and his memory is buried with him in his sepulchre! Connected with life, are all the diversified comforts with which the human mind has formed any acquaintance. The charities of friendship, the blessings of society in all its ramifications, the felicity of domestic enjoyments, the relations of father and child, of husband and wife, of a man and his brother, the reciprocal duties arising out of these, the consolations immutably connected with them—are all suspended in this trembling balance—LIFE—are all obliterated in the instant of its expiration—all vanish, when the spirit quits the clay tabernacle! Yonder fragment of the human form—the wreck of man—all that has fallen into the relentless hand of death—once enjoyed the comforts, the magnificence, the pride of power—diffused the felicity which he participated—acted and moved a prince in the circle of society—and, a star of the first magnitude, irradiated the satellites which revolved around him. To him the young looked up for intelligence: his tongue moved only to utter wisdom, and his words dropped as the latter rain. When he opened his lips every murmur was hushed, and thousands moved not, held, as it were by enchantment, and bound by the magic of his eloquence. Such he *was!*

but all these honors stood inseparably connected with life, and with its exhausted lamp, the ray of intelligence which illumined the world—expired! Such was Joseph—but when he died, the light of his brethren was quenched, and the staff of his father’s house, broken!

“And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation.” Who is not charmed with this impressive mode of describing the revolutions of time? Other writers with me, would have dwelt long upon a theme so copious, and would have exhausted all their eloquence upon a subject which furnishes such ample scope for description. But what prolonged narrative could be equally striking with this single verse? Its brevity in a moment sets before you the velocity with which the stream rolls ages and generations along to the illimitable abyss of eternity. There is not a period to the sentence till a whole generation is swept away! One should imagine that Moses had snatched a feather from the wing of time, to record the swiftness of his flight, and the rapidity of his desolations!

Joseph died—but the God of Abraham lived—lived to remember and to accomplish his promise. “And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty: and the land was filled with them.” Their preservation in this deserted condition is rendered credible by that which our eyes witness every day, in their present population, the marks which they carry in their countenance decisively characteristic of their nation, and their separation from all the people among whom they dwell, although scattered over the face of the whole earth. This is one of the standing miracles which infidelity can neither gainsay nor resist.

“Now there arose a new king over Egypt who knew not Joseph.” It is not improbable that he might be a stranger, or a foreigner, exalted to the throne, for the government of Egypt was elective, and their princes successively took the name of Pharaoh, as it was the custom of the Roman emperors long afterwards to bear that of Cæsar. And if this monarch was chosen from among the Egyptians, seven kings had reigned, and sixty years elapsed, between the death of Joseph and his ascension to the throne; a space of time more than sufficient to obliterate the signal services of a minister from the bosom of princes. The bodily strength of the Israelites, and their prodigious numbers, alarmed this jealous monarch; and with narrow, barbarous policy, he “set over them taskmasters to afflict them, and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage.” It was now that the prophecy delivered to Abraham began to be accomplished: for they were “strangers in a land that was not theirs”—and *that*, in a state of servitude.

The hand of God continued to work in defiance of the weak and cruel king of Egypt, and “the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew.” The measures of Pharaoh became proportionably severe; and not satisfied with imposing the fetters of slavery, he commanded that every male child should be cast into the river so soon as it was born. This decree, as unnatural as it was sanguinary, was executed but too severely by those to whom the commission was given! The voice of lamentation was heard throughout the land; “Rachel, weeping for her children, refused to be comforted because they were not.” Day after day the sun arose and set in blood. In childbirth the

mother felt the double pangs of nature: she no longer rejoiced when a man child was born into the world as the recompense of her pains: she could no longer look forwards with pleasing hope, and say, "This same shall comfort us, concerning our work and the toil of our hands:" the moment the infant beheld the light, the stern decree of the inhuman monarch consigned it to the grave!

At this perilous period Moses was born. Three months, three anxious months, maternal tenderness eluded the vigilance of the king, and the mother concealed her child. She struggled to save his life so long as it was practicable: the danger became every day more pressing; and there remained to her but one desperate resource—if resource it might be called, which hope scarcely dared to flatter, and which was no less than to expose her babe on the banks of the river. What *could* she do? Say, ye mothers, what would *you* have done? If she kept him he *must* die: if she exposed him there was a possibility—a *bare* possibility that he might live! An ark of bulrushes was quickly framed; and in this frail casket, she laid the jewel more precious to her than thousands of gold and silver, in the flags by the river's brink. Tearing herself from the spot, she consigned to his sister the cruel task of watching what would become of him. Yonder he lies, sleeping on the banks of the Nile, unconscious of the dangers which hover around his defenceless head. Under the surface of the waters, slumbered the fierce, un pitying crocodile, the native of that river. Should a breath of wind arise, the bulrush ark would be wafted from the flags, and precipitated into the midst of the stream, a vessel, alas! too frail long to resist the waves.

In this interval of bitter suspense, the daughter of Pharaoh drew near to the river, and discovering the ark, commanded that it should be brought to her. "And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and behold, the babe wept." The pressing calls of hunger broke his repose, and he missed the warm, affectionate embrace of his mother. His limbs were chilled by the cold waves, and his tears excited the compassion of the princess. His sister, who stood by, with feelings which cannot be described, a spectator of the whole scene, was sent to call an Hebrew woman to nurse him: and "the maid went and called the child's mother."

Ah, little did the princess imagine, when she snatched this helpless babe from a watery grave, that she was the instrument of raising up a deliverer to the Israelites, who should shake the throne of Egypt to its foundation. She little thought that the deserted child of a wretched Hebrew slave, when increased in years, would acquire unparalleled glory, as a legislator, as a prophet, as a general, and as a monarch. She did not foresee, when she beheld the ark floating, the sport of winds, and the child exposed equally to the waters, and to the crocodiles of the river, and pity touched her bosom, that he would stand upon the shores of the Red Sea, not only the witness, but the instrument, of the destruction of the flower and strength of Egypt: and that he would thus become the righteous avenger, at once of the cruelties of her father and his successor, and of the wrongs of his brethren, which they had so long endured, in patient submission, and with broken spirits!

"And the child grew"—and Stephen adds, he "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." With a

modesty becoming the meekest of men, Moses passes over his several attainments: but the testimony of the first martyr for Christianity is abundantly confirmed, by the intrinsic excellence of those very compositions which are now passing under our review. CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS\* asserts, "that Moses was taught arithmetic, geometry, physic, music, and hieroglyphics: to which Philo adds astronomy."† Should any one be disposed to insinuate, or to imagine, that from the fables of Egypt Moses framed his history of the creation, let him compare the Egyptian hypothesis, which is all confusion and absurdity, with the scriptural account, which is all order and perspicuity: besides which, we have the most decisive evidences, that the Egyptian hypothesis is later by far than the Mosaic writings. The oldest writers extant yield to Moses in point of antiquity; and however distorted their compositions are, they betray their source, and bear strong internal evidences, that they are imperfect traditions from these pure records.

If Moses was indebted, in the first instance, to the literature of Egypt, for the high rank which he holds among the ancient writers, he was indebted still more to the capacious natural powers which God bestowed upon him, without which, no culture of science could have elevated him so high, as an historian of such literary eminence. He furnishes one among many evidences, that in a variety of respects one man differs from another. In respect of TALENTS, man differs from man. We sometimes meet with a spirit emerging from its native obscurity, and attracting the admiration of the world. Every thing conspired to throw

\* Clem. Alex. lib. i. See *Anc. Univ. Hist.* vol. II. b. i. chap. 7, note N.  
 † Philo in vit. Mosis.

the man into the shade. Poverty frowned upon his birth, and shut the doors of knowledge against him. When he entered life, he mingled unnoticed with the crowd. But none could close the book of nature before him, and no disadvantages could suppress the vigor of a spirit, born to rise, and to astonish. Following only the benignity of nature, he brings from his mind such ample stores of observation, and discovers so much native genius, that he ascends at once to eminence; and like a sun veiled from his rising, reveals at once to the world his glory in its noontide brightness. Hard by him stands one, *forced* into notice. He was born noble and affluent. Every possible mean of improvement was put into his hand, and the book of knowledge was opened to his view. No pains were spared, no expense was withheld, in his education. And yet his very elevation is painful. It is *that* of fortune, and not *that* of nature. He is always placed in a conspicuous situation, to be always despised; and the literary advantages which he enjoyed, have been unable to correct the deficiencies of nature. They descended upon his unfruitful mind, like the showers of the spring upon the sands of the desert, which imbibe the rain, but return neither grass nor flower. In respect of LITERATURE, one man differs from another. Here stands a favored son of science, who has access to nature in all her parts, through the avenues of deep and learned research. He has made the dead, and the living, contribute to his pleasure, and to his improvement. He has plundered time of all the treasures, which he had snatched from falling empires, and rescued from the greedy grave of oblivion. And he moves among his fellow men, an angel for illumination, and an oracle for wisdom. There stands his

neighbor, gazing with unconscious eyes upon the page which *he* is devouring. He sees no beauty in that oration—no force in that train of reasoning—no conclusion in that demonstration—no order in those starry heavens. All access to the tree of knowledge is denied to him; and he turns from the page full of genius, of energy, of intelligence, and says, “I cannot read it, for I am not learned.” In respect of RANK IN SOCIETY, one man differs from another. One is born to sway a sceptre, and to rule a powerful empire. Nations tremble at his frown, and princes are his servants. His navy thunders along every hostile shore, and the sword of his army is drunk with the blood of the slain. He travels—and a whole country is in motion. Harbingers precede his face, guards encompass his person, a willing people bow the knee to him. Not daring to lift his eyes, yonder peasant retires, as the equipage passes, and turns his rough hand, rendered hard by labor, to the most menial services. He eats bread, and drinks water, with heaviness of heart. A large family multiplies upon him. His children cry with hunger. He gives them all—he divides the last loaf among them, and returns himself faint to the labor of the field, without tasting a morsel, lest he should diminish their scanty pittance. And yet he also is a child of humanity! In respect of RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLE, one man differs from another. Here, is a man who receives every blessing as the gift of heaven with thankfulness: who bends with lowly resignation under the stroke which robs him of his comforts. In his habitation, however humble, the voice of prayer and of praise is constantly heard; and his comforts, however few, are augmented by the benign influences of piety. There, is a wretched man, deemed happy by

the world, who never bowed his knee before God his maker; and never knew a gratification beyond pampering his appetite, and amassing wealth. Yet both are men, and equally responsible to God. With great natural genius, Moses enjoyed profound literature: from an obscure situation he rose high in the rank of society: to all these, he added fervent piety; and *for* all, he was far more indebted to God than to man.

Respecting the first forty years of his life nothing is recorded by Moses himself; and we shall not fill up the blank by reciting the fables of the Jewish rabbies. But one thing stands on record, by the pen of an apostle, and that is to his everlasting honor: that, "when he was come to years, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season: esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."

Having attained the stature and strength of a man, the first effort of Moses was to break the rod of oppression. Seeing an Egyptian smite an Israelite, one of his brethren, with much barbarity, he slew the officer, and buried him in the sand. It should seem, that this action was performed under a divine commission, since Stephen says, "he supposed his brethren would have understood, how that God by his hand would deliver them; but they understood not."—So far from it, that the next day, when two Hebrews strove, and he interposed his friendly offices towards healing the breach, they not only did not accept his mediation, but accused him of the slaughter of the Egyptian. The thing reached the ears of the king; and Moses finding that it was known, and that his life was in danger, fled

into the land of Midian, in Arabia Petrea, the metropolis of which was called Petra, not far from Horeb: which was either a mountain near that of Sinai, or Sinai and Horeb were two summits of the same mountain, or Horeb was the common name for the whole ridge of mountains upon which Sinai was situated: so denominated probably from their excessive dryness.\*

In his banishment he married Zipporah, the daughter of the priest, or prince, of Midian: by whom he had a son, whom he called Gersham, which signifies, "*a stranger here*," in allusion to his own situation. About this time the king of Egypt died: and his successor, in compliance with customs of the time, was also called Pharaoh: but this change in the government of Egypt, effected no relaxation in the sufferings of Israel.

But at length the hand of God was interposed; and the set time for the expiration of their bondage having arrived—God "heard their cries—remembered his covenant—looked upon his people—and had respect unto them." While Moses kept the flock of his father-in-law at the foot of Horeb, he saw a bush which burned with fire, and was not consumed: striking emblem of the state of his brethren, who were at that time—"persecuted, but not forsaken—cast down, but not destroyed!" Turning aside to examine this phenomenon, the voice of God addressed him, and commanded him to draw off his shoes, because the ground on which he stood was holy. Perhaps the custom of persons putting off their shoes when they entered a temple, of which we read, might arise originally from some tradition of this history.

\*See Anc. Univ. Hist. Vol. ii. b. i. chap. 7. note Q.

And now opens his awful commission—a commission so novel in its kind, so difficult in its execution, and so important in its consequences, that we cannot wonder at the reluctance which Moses felt and manifested, when commanded to undertake it. But who is able to withstand the counsel of God? His objections are overruled: his difficulties are removed: his brother Aaron is joined with him in the embassy; and the great and awful name, JEHOVAH, is the name by which God sends to the Israelites. This name was afterwards never pronounced by the Jews but once a year, and then by the high-priest only, in dismissing the people.

Who is not prepared for some great events, when the embassy is not from one prince to another, but from God to man? The commission of Moses opened and closed with miracles. God had said that he would “judge the nation” which should “oppress” the seed of Abraham; and he therefore permitted the heart of the king of Egypt to be hardened. Upon this principle, perhaps, we may account for the circumstance, of his suffering the magicians successfully to imitate some of the miracles of Moses. A question has long been agitated respecting the operations of these men, the power by which they were performed, the agency of demons, and the existence of magical arts. It is a discussion foreign to a simple narration of facts: and would your time allow us to bring forwards the various opinions of those who have written on the subject, we should only weary your attention, and bewilder your imaginations.\*

\*See note 1. of this Lecture at the end of the volume.

It could afford you no pleasure to-night to recount the unequal contest between Pharaoh, and the Deity: to see a worm of the dust, lifting up his hand against God; or to dwell upon the afflictions which he brought upon himself, and upon his people. All nature was armed against this rebel. The water throughout Egypt was turned into blood: and when it recovered its natural color and qualities, it became prolific, and was the source of a new plague, in sending forth swarms of frogs. The very dust of the earth was animated, and was made an instrument of torture. The air was filled with insects. The cattle, and the inhabitants of the land, died, with diseases new and intolerable. The artillery of heaven opened upon this stubborn empire: God "cast forth his ice like morsels;" he "thundered in the heavens," and "the fire ran along the ground." And what the hail and the tempest had spared, the next display of divine power utterly destroyed. An east wind blew a day and a night, and an army of locusts rode upon its rough pinion. Terrible beyond description is the desolation effected by these irresistible invaders in a few hours; and unhappy is the country wherever they alight—for they leave it "a desolate wilderness!" When these fearful enemies were withdrawn, a darkness, prolonged three days and three nights, brooded over this wretched people—a darkness which might be felt!

"Not such as this; not such as nature makes;  
A midnight, nature shudder'd to behold;  
A midnight new! a dread eclipse (without  
Opposing spheres) from her Creator's frown!"\*

\*Young' *Night Thoughts: Night IV.* l. 247--250.

With inflexible obstinacy the king refused to release the Israelites, and the last blow was now to be struck. Behold then, the families of Egypt retiring to rest, as every family retires—anticipating the pleasures and the duties of the morrow. The young man bounds to his chamber, with a foot unwearied by labor. The only son of the widow, the hope and staff of her age, receives the evening salutation of maternal tenderness, and sinks to repose. The mother who has just entered upon that tender relation, and has just begun to feel its pleasing anxieties, lays her sleeping babe upon her bosom, and smiles upon him, with inexpressible delight. Even the captive in the dungeon is bound in the softer fetters of sleep, and his first born reposes by his side, a voluntary prisoner with his father. Pharaoh yields to a milder dominion, and a more gentle sceptre than his own; and hard by rests his eldest hope. All is silent; and of this multitude who have fallen asleep without apprehension, how many shall never see the morning rise! It is the hour of midnight—and in an instant sleep is chased from every eye—a general groan reverberates from the palace to the prison—“there is not an house in which there is not one dead!”—From this terrible plague the family of every Israelite was exempted. A lamb, the type of HIM who was to be slain in the fulness of time, to take away the sin of the world, was crucified; and the blood sprinkled on the lintel and on the two side posts of the door: and over all the houses, upon which the blood was seen, the destroying angel passed, and the inhabitants remained unhurt.

Before the morning rose, the Egyptians were urgent with the people to depart, and Pharaoh sent them forth with haste. “And the children of Israel borrowed of the

Egyptians, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment." We notice this passage, because from it the opposers of revelation, have been pleased to deny to the Israelites common honesty. We waive the principle upon which they might be justified, in contending that they had amply earned all that they borrowed of the Egyptians, by the works which they had performed, during their bondage, without recompense; and shall only submit a plain criticism on the Hebrew word, which our translators render, "*to borrow*." It is, וישאל—derived from שאל—a word the primary sense of which is, not *to borrow*, but *to ask as a gift*; as may be seen by the following passage, where the same word is used—"Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost part of the earth for thy possession."\* Josephus, in his ancient history of the Jews, puts this construction upon the text, and says, "The Egyptians *honored them with presents*, partly to induce them the sooner to depart, and partly on account of their intimacy with them."†

The plains of Rameses near Goshen, the land which Joseph gave to Israel, and which was the part of Egypt the nearest to Canaan, was the place where they assembled: and they numbered "six hundred thousand on foot, that were men, beside children." They left Egypt, according to the prediction, at the

\* Ps. ii, 8. The phrase is, שאל ממני ואמתה—In the interpretation which I have given of שאל, I have not followed merely the opinion of lexicographers, who all agree that its first sense is to *ask as a gift*; but upon a close examination of the different senses in which the word is used in the Bible, in pursuing which I followed Taylor's Hebrew Concordance, I found among innumerable passages requiring this first sense, but four which would bear the interpretation *to borrow*: and one of these is the passage in question—the other, the dedication of Samuel by his mother to the service of God. The remaining two, are in 2 Kings iv, 3, and 2 Kings vi, 5, where unquestionably it can have no other meaning than *to borrow*.

† Joseph Antiq. Jud. Tom. I, lib. 11, cap. 15, p. 87. Hudsoni edition. His words are—*δενειν οι τρις Εβραιοι επιφαν.*

expiration of four hundred and thirty years, computing from the time when the promise was first given to Abraham. And they carried with them the bones of Joseph, in obedience to his dying requisition.\*

One more struggle was yet to be made. Notwithstanding the evils they had endured, Pharaoh, and all Egypt, regretted the departure of Israel, and resolved to pursue after them, to reduce them to their former state of servitude. He overtook them by the brink of the Red Sea—and in the moment when no way of escape appeared, and they had given up all for lost, at the command of God the sea was divided, and they passed through, “as upon dry land.” The king of Egypt and his army followed hard after them into the sea: after being terrified and discomfited the whole night by the power of God, in the morning they wished to relinquish the pursuit. But the Israelites had now reached the opposite shore; and the sea, returning in its strength, buried the king, and his army, under its billows.

Such is the Mosaic record of the slavery and deliverance of Israel, upon which we should not have detained you so long, were it not, that the remaining part of our subject is very short, and we entreat your patient attention for a few minutes, to

## II. THE FOREIGN TESTIMONIES WHICH REMAIN TO THESE FACTS.†

Respecting the authority of that portion of sacred history over which we have now passed, let the following particulars be observed:

\* See note 2, of this Lecture, at the end of the volume.

† The statements which follow, are selected principally from Bishop Watson's Theological Tracts: vol. i, p. 294, &c.

1. It cannot be denied that there did exist such a person as Moses; and that he was the Jewish legislator. JUSTIN, in his abridgement of Trogus Pompeius,\* mentions his beauty; and Longinus cites him by name, in his character as a lawgiver, and quotes the beginning of Genesis, as an instance of the true sublime.

2. It will not be disputed that Moses brought the children of Israel from Egypt. This fact is not only asserted throughout the whole of the sacred writings, but confirmed by the combined evidence of all ancient historians.

MANETHO gives an account of the time, the manner, and many of the principal circumstances, attending this event; as we learn from JOSEPHUS in his first book against Apion.†

JUSTIN mentions their departure, but assigns a false reason for it: this, however, does not invalidate his testimony respecting the fact in question; and so far as his authority goes, it proves that the departure of Israel from Egypt under the conduct of Moses, was acknowledged in his days.‡

TACITUS records the same event; and asserts that the Jews were expelled Egypt on account of the leprosy. This conjecture, for it is no more, is perfectly groundless: because it is well known that the leprosy was a common distemper among the Egyptians; and for this reason, the law of Moses calls the leprosy the disease of Egypt, and banishes lepers from the congregation.

\* Justin lib. xxxvi, cap. 2.

† Manetho, as is customary in ancient writers, because of the questionable sources whence their information was frequently drawn, blends truth with fable, as may be seen by referring to Josephus.

‡ Justin et supra.

PLINY confirms this assertion, by speaking of the leprosy (which he calls *Elephantiasis*) as common to the Egyptians. They might possibly communicate it to the Israelites: but it is improbable that they should expel them for a distemper which they themselves imparted to them. But

TROGUS POMPEIUS says that the magicians caused Moses and the Israelites to be expelled, because *they themselves* were afflicted with a kind of murrain or leprosy, and were afraid lest it should spread throughout the land: which account probably refers to the plague of boils, which was brought upon all Egypt, because Pharaoh refused to let the people go.\* Still observe—whatever reasons these heathen writers give for the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, they all agree in confirming the fact, that the descendants of Abraham were enslaved in Egypt, and that they departed out of it under the conduct of Moses.

3. The Jews could not have asserted these miracles, and the deliverance of their fathers, supposing no such miracles to have been wrought, and no such deliverance to have been effected, without exposing themselves to contempt, and *their fiction* to detection, among all the nations by which they were subdued, after the death of Moses and Joshua. Whereas, it does not appear that their records were disputed: and the writer of the first book of Samuel, (who was probably Samuel himself; or some contemporary, so far as his history is concerned in it,) represents the Philistines as saying, when the ark of God came into the camp, "Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hands of these mighty Gods? These are the Gods that smote

\* Justin ut supra. See note 3, of this Lecture, at the end of the volume.

the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness:" evidently an imperfect tradition of these facts, as they confound the transactions of Egypt, and those of the wilderness, together. Now what purpose *could* it answer to put into the mouth of the Philistines, such a declaration, if they did not really utter it, except to expose the historian to contempt? as, at the time, any one was able to contradict it, if it were not true. But it is evident that the remembrance of these miracles was not confined to Egypt: and that other lands had heard of them, and believed them.

4. NUMENIUS, a Pythagorean philosopher, relates that Jannes and Jambres (as is recorded also in the New Testament) were chosen by the Egyptians, to oppose Moses, and "to hinder the effects of his miracles and prayers, which had brought down many grievous plagues upon Egypt, just about the time of the Jews' banishment from that country."

5. The Jews themselves, upon whom Moses could not have imposed in the first instance, kept in remembrance all the principal facts which we have recited this night, by their rites; which rites received birth with the events themselves, and were kept up till the coming of Christ; and some of them, connected inseparably with the departure from Egypt, are celebrated to this hour among the Jews: such are the passover, and the redemption of the first-born.

6. In a most able work, entitled "reflections upon the Books of the Holy Scriptures, to establish the Truth of the Christian Religion," a custom of the Egyptians is mentioned, which continued till *after* Jesus Christ: "They used to mark with *red*, their sheep, their trees, their houses, and their lands, the day before the passover; as may be seen in EPIPHANIUS;

which custom could proceed from no other cause, than from the fear of the Egyptians lest the same plague and mortality should come upon them, which was inflicted upon their forefathers, and from the hope of preventing it, by the use of a talisman, somewhat resembling the sprinkling of the blood of the paschal lamb on the doors of the Israelites, which was the method prescribed to Moses, for the deliverance of his people from that great plague\*."

Lastly, These miracles were confirmed by succeeding ones equally important, and equally authenticated. Among others—the pillar of fire and cloud, which preceded the Israelites, and which was so serviceable to them, and so injurious to Pharaoh, during their passage through the Red Sea, is mentioned by EUSEBIUS, who says, "that the remembrance of it was preserved, to his time, at Memphis."—DIODORUS SICULUS also, when he is recording the history of the Troglodytes, mentions a tradition, among the native inhabitants of the spot, of the division of the Red Sea†.

Such was the slavery and the deliverance of Israel, according to Moses: such are the reasons upon which we present this account to you as strictly true; and such are the testimonies which we have been able to select from other ancient historians; and we think we may venture to affirm, that God has not left his word without a witness. It is easy for infidelity to imagine,

\* This work was composed by P. Allix, a French refugee: it was published in London in 1688: this extract is in chap. iii. on the *four last books of Moses*: the general arguments used above will be found in this work, which is preserved in Bishop Watson's Theological Tracts, Vol. I. p. 295.

† Diod. Sic. lib. iii. p. 122. This tradition is noticed also in Bruce's Travels, Vol. II. p. 136, 137, new 8vo. edition. For the original passage, see note 4, of this Lecture at the end of the volume.

that such and such things are impositions now: the question is, how were they imposed upon mankind *at the time*? And by what means, supposing they were impositions, did they obtain credit in the world? Why have they not been detected and overthrown, with other impositions? How is it that these fables have survived the attacks of time, when so many *authentic* histories have sunk under them? In short, it is much easier for skepticism to raise objections against revelation, than to remove the difficulties which clog its own system. When you consider the distant period in which these events took place: the darkness and idolatry of the heathen world: the separation of the Jews from all other nations: the difficulties of a language no longer in use: the mere fragments of heathen historians which have come down to us—the wonder is not, that obscurity should rest upon the evidences of the Mosaic account of things so remote, but that such decisive and numerous testimonies of other writers should remain. It becomes skepticism to urge its objections against the Bible with caution, and to oppose it with decency. The testimonies which we have produced deserve, at least, some small regard, and are not to be overthrown by ridicule, by witticisms, by the sneer which distorts the countenance, the contempt which swells upon the lip, or the scorn which looks from the eye, of a deist. We feel no apprehensions in submitting this volume to the attacks of infidelity. These writings have stood too many ages, to excite any alarm in our bosom, from assaults such as those which are levelled against them in the present day. Let its adversaries produce a better system: let them invent something more consolatory to the heart, and more adapted to human feelings, and human expectations,

living and dying: let them overturn the evidences which have resisted the devastations of so many centuries: let them prove it useless and injurious: and then shall our hearts begin "to tremble for the ark of God."—Till then, we adhere, with perfect cheerfulness, to a just and acknowledged principle, and calmly abide all its consequences: "If this counsel, or this work, be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it!"

## LECTURE IX.

THE JOURNEY OF ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS:  
THEIR ESTABLISHMENT IN CANAAN; AND THE  
CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDING THESE EVENTS.

JOSHUA XXIV, 2—13.

*And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other Gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac. And I gave unto Isaac, Jacob and Esau: and I gave unto Esau Mount Seir, to possess it; but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt. I sent Moses also and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt, according to that which I did among them: and afterward I brought you out. And I brought your fathers out of Egypt: and ye came unto the sea; and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and horsemen unto the Red Sea. And when they cried unto the Lord, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them, and covered them; and your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt: and ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season. And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other side Jordan; and they fought with you: and I gave them into your hand, that ye might possess their land; and I destroy-*

*ed them from before you. Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and warred against Israel, and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you: But I would not hearken unto Balaam; therefore he blessed you still: So I delivered you out of his hand. And ye went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho and the men of Jericho brought against you, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I delivered them into your hand. And I sent the hornet before you, which drave them out from before you, even the two kings of the Amorites; but not with thy sword, nor with thy bow. And I have given you a land for which ye did not labor, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not, do ye eat!*

WE are indebted to God himself, for all the information which we possess, in relation to either his nature or his operations. He furnishes the medium through which he is seen in the visible creation, in the arrangements of Providence, in the scheme of redemption: and all that we are able to comprehend of "life and immortality," is "brought to light by the gospel." The human mind requires a medium through which it may discern God, as the eye requires a medium through which it may see. As that medium to the eye is light, so is the medium of the spirit, illumination. It is in vain that creation subsists around me, except I have an *organ of vision*. To the blind man it is annihilated. The works of God exist, but not to him: he is insensible of their beauties, he never was permitted to admire their symmetry. And it is in

vain that we possess an organ of vision, unless some *medium* be furnished through which it may operate. I ascend the mountain at midnight, and look from its summit. The landscape around me is the same as at mid-day, and the organ of vision is the same: but light, the medium through which the eye sees, is wanting; and I look for the river, for the meadow, for the mansion, for the hill, for all the beauties of the scenery, in vain—I am presented with “an universal blank.” It is in vain that, as an intelligent creature, I am surrounded by the works of God, and am furnished with reasoning powers, with a capacity formed to contemplate, to examine, and to admire them, unless I am furnished also with some medium through which they may be seen. Revelation is that medium. Were the eye of reason quenched in the spirit, the mind would be in that state of incapacity to discern the invisible God, as is the man born blind to examine his works. And were the light of revelation extinguished, although the man were in full possession of his intellectual powers, he would resemble the person on the summit of the mountain at midnight, in vain attempting to explore the landscape: he would possess the *organ*, but be destitute of the *medium*; he would have the *eye*, but not the *light*. And, for this reason, the apostle represents the heathens, as “feeling after, if haply they might find God, although he was not far from every one of them:” as men involved in perfect darkness, although possessing the organ of vision, are compelled to *feel* for the object of their pursuit, even when that object is at their side, or before their face.

It will be readily acknowledged, that through the medium of revelation alone, we can form any conception of things which are “not seen as yet.” We can

know nothing, we can anticipate nothing of futurity, but as revealed religion removes the curtain, and unveils a portion of invisible objects. But we will venture to assert, that the visible creation itself is not beheld to perfection, but through the medium of revelation. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work:" but the man who has never received this divine medium, discerns not that glory. "Day unto day uttereth speech, night unto night sheweth knowledge:" "There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard"—but he understands not their testimony. For this reason, many have beheld their beauties, and have heard their voice, who have not acknowledged the existence of God; and, from these alone, none have understood his perfections. And if revelation be necessary to the developement of creation, how much more is it necessary to unfold the mysteries of Providence! After all, but little is at present discovered. Our curiosity is repressed, and our impatience controlled, by the declaration, "what I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." Yet we are permitted, sometimes through this medium, to comprehend a part of the scheme, that we may form some conception of the magnificence of the whole. God decyphers a little of his own mysterious handwriting, to prove his perfect ability to construe the entire volume. He makes known a portion of his purposes, as a pledge, that he will, hereafter, fulfil his engagement to shew the harmony, the propriety, and the wisdom of all.

The scripture fact to be illustrated this night, is, THE JOURNEY OF ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS; THEIR ESTABLISHMENT IN CANAAN; AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDING THESE EVENTS.

This subject will completely confirm the preceding observations; for we shall see, in some instances, the wisdom and harmony of Providence, while so deep obscurity rests upon others, as to compel us to acknowledge, that "secret things belong to God." Our Lecture must comprehend more or less of that history comprised in the last four books of Moses, from the fifteenth chapter of Exodus, to the twenty-fourth chapter of Joshua inclusive, embracing a period of about sixty-four years. We shall adopt in the present instance, our general mode of discussion, which is, to consider these events, with their concomitant circumstances, as they are related in the scriptures: to set before you such foreign testimonies as appear calculated to elucidate and to confirm the scriptural narration; and to attempt an answer to some objection which skepticism has raised against this part of the sacred records.

I. WE SHALL CONSIDER THESE EVENTS. WITH THEIR CONCOMITANT CIRCUMSTANCES, AS THEY ARE RELATED IN THE SCRIPTURES.

Our object, at present, is to produce an epitome of the narrative to be considered, is as brief a form as possible; and for a more complete history of the wanderings and establishment of these singularly preserved people, we must refer you to the Bible itself, whose unadorned, and faithful record, may be consulted at your leisure.

In tracing the Israelites through all their journey, and regarding them as eye-witnesses of the wonders performed for their preservation, we shall find their character to be precisely such as David represented it, when he said, "they sang his praises, but they soon forgot his works!" When they beheld the Egyptians dead upon

the sea shore, under a grateful impression of the miraculous deliverance wrought on their behalf, they joined in the sublime anthem of their leader: and if we were to form our judgment upon the appearance *then* presented of attachment to the God who fought for them, we should conclude that his goodness could never be obliterated from their remembrance, and that their thankfulness could never by any dangers be extinguished. Scarcely, however, had three days elapsed, before they murmured because the waters of Marah were bitter: and no sooner was this evil remedied, than their provisions failed, and their complaints were renewed with indecent violence. With indulgent kindness, the Lord supplied their necessities, by sending, with the dew of the morning, a substance bearing some resemblance to a small pearl, which answered the purpose of bread, and which, not knowing by what name to call it, they termed MANNA—a word implying, “*what is it?*”—in the evening a prodigious flock of quails came up, and covered the camp. This event took place about the middle of April, at which period these birds are observed to cross the Red Sea in vast numbers. The miracle therefore consisted, not so much in the immense multitudes which fell in the camp of Israel, as in the direction of them thither, precisely at the time when the Israelites needed them, and on the very evening in which God had, by the mouth of Moses, promised to send them.\*

Upon receiving this miraculous assistance, they continued their journey; and immediately afterwards, the failure of water drew from them fresh murmurings at the perils of their situation, and new reproaches at

\*See Anc. Univ. Hist. Vol. ii. b. i. chap. 7. note Q. p. 592.

their inoffensive and skilful general. Moses smote a rock, from which issued a stream to supply their necessities. We must observe once for all, that it is no part of our business to enter into a defence of the miracles which it may be necessary to notice in this course of Lectures, or to answer the objections which have been raised against them: our engagement is simply to state the events as they are recorded, as so many matters of fact, and to produce such confirmations of them, as such, as the fragments of ancient historians furnish. It may be proper also to remark, in order to preserve distinctness of apprehension in pursuing this narrative, that Moses smote another rock upon a similar occasion—and that these were two distinct events. The first took place at Rephidim, in their eleventh station:\* the second in the desert of Sin, in their thirty-third station.† The one happened, in the first year of their departure from Egypt; the other, in the fortieth. The former was smitten by the rod of Moses, the instrument of the wonders performed in Egypt: the latter, by the rod of Aaron, which budded to determine the priesthood. The one took place before the erection of the tabernacle; and the other, after it. *This*, was performed with calmness: *that*, was smitten in anger; and the conduct of Moses so displeased the Lord, that it was the cause of his prohibition from entering the land of Canaan.‡ Having made these remarks, we shall be in no danger of confounding these two, distinct events.

Before they removed from this station, they were compelled to fight with the Amalekites. Joshua went out to battle at the head of the army: Moses as-

\*Exodus xvii, 6.

†Numb. xx, 11.

‡See Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. ii, chap. 7. note T. p. 596, 597.

cended the top of the hill, with the rod of God in his hand, probably to intercede for the interposition of heaven.—Israel prevailed so long as his hands were elevated: but when through weariness he suffered them to drop, victory leaned to the side of Amalek. Aaron and Hur supported his arms till the sun went down, and Amalek was subdued. How lovely is fraternal unity! Even Moses needed assistance; and who can pass through life without it? Let us learn, that our burdens are lightened, our peace promoted, and our success ensured, by mutual kindness, and by mutual attention. And who can read this singularly beautiful narration, without being reminded of Jesus our Mediator, through whose intercession, and the lifting up of his hands, we have freedom of access to God now, and shall finally be made more than conquerors, over all our enemies?

This victory opened the way to Sinai, and with the most awful emotions we approach the sacred mountain! Gathering around its foot, the tribes of Israel present themselves before the eternal Lawgiver. The trumpet has sounded loud, and long, to call their leader into the thick darkness: and see, with a palpitating heart, he prepares to obey the summons! The thunder rolls peal upon peal to announce the descent of the Deity. With frequent, and vivid flashes, the lightning cleaves the cloud, and darts across the dreadful obscurity. Sinai trembles to its base, and “a great and strong wind” rushes through the desert. Every time the trumpet sounds, it increases in loudness: and as it sounds long, the signal thrills through every heart, and fear blanches every countenance. The holy hill is fenced: and the command of God is, “Charge the people, lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze,

and many of them perish." As with one voice, the whole camp rang with their supplications to Moses—"Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die!"—Such were the terrors of the former dispensation, and such the stern command which forbade too near an approach to God. But far other sounds are heard from yonder mount of peace. The frame of nature is indeed convulsed, darkness extends her mantle over the sky, the sun withdraws his shining, and the clouds weep some drops of pity: but these are marks of sympathy, not indications of wrath. Yonder sufferer blesses with his dying lips, compassion floats in his dim and languid eyes, and the language of peace issues from his tongue, as it cleaves to the roof of his mouth. "IT IS FINISHED"—rolls on the air, with inexpressible softness. The heart is melted by this scene, but not terrified. Contrition lays her gentle hand upon the obdurate spirit. The unpitying eye forgets its ferocity, and learns to weep. No command thunders, "whosoever toucheth the mount, shall surely be put to death:" but a voice like a gale of a summer's evening whispers, "Come up hither, for yet there is room!"

In receiving the law from the hand of heaven, Moses was forty days absent on the mount. A portion of this time, the Israelites patiently waited: but at length, forgetting the recent terrors with which the near approach of the Deity had filled their bosoms, and impatient of delay, they compelled Aaron, by their importunity and violence, to form a golden calf; and to this idol they bowed down as unto their God.—We conceive that they borrowed this image from the Egyptian mythology: for without it, a calf, one should suppose, would have been the last symbol they

would have chosen, as a representation of the Deity. As the term "*calf*" is by no means completely definite, it is highly probable, that it was an exact resemblance of one of the Egyptian idols. The Egyptian Isis had the face of a calf, with the form of a man from the neck downwards. The Egyptian Apis was altogether the similitude of a calf. There has been one objection raised against this position; which is, that the idolatry of Israel was anterior to the worship of these idols, or of animal resemblances in Egypt: but we think this assertion hard to be proved. Idols, and image worship, *were* in existence in those days, or the Israelites had not dreamt of them; and Egypt, the mother of hieroglyphics, would hardly be the last to embrace the system of idolatry. Admitting our position, which will at once account for the symbol of the Deity chosen by the Israelites, we are furnished with further evidences of the facts—that they actually resided in Egypt, from a knowledge of their customs—and that they had recently departed thence, from the attachment, and preference, shewn to the objects of their worship.

From this event, follow a succession of rebellions in various shapes, and appointments of divers ceremonies. The next point of importance upon which we fix, is the sending of twelve men as spies to view the promised land. Ten of these messengers brought back an evil report; and Joshua, and Caleb, alone attempted, by a just and manly relation, to encourage the hearts, and to strengthen the hands, of the people. Such, however, was their discontent, that they resolved to return to their bondage in Egypt; and were actually consulting whom to choose as a leader, when the uproar was suppressed, by the appearance of the

glory of the Lord resting upon the tabernacle. The punishment inflicted upon their unbelief and folly, was justly severe: all above twenty years of age were excluded the land, Joshua and Caleb excepted: they were sentenced to forty years wandering in the wilderness, till that generation should fall into the dust; and the ten spies, who brought the false report, were struck with instantaneous death. A great number of the people afterwards fell in the ill-timed battle of the Amalekites, which God had expressly prohibited.

To this affecting circumstance succeeded the rebellion of Korah, and the confirmation of Aaron's priesthood—the strife at Meribah—the setting up of the brazen serpent, that striking type of Christ—the defeat of Sihon and Og—the beautiful and eloquent prophecies of Balaam—the idolatry of Israel with the Moabites, and their punishment, with the slaughter of Balaam, and of the five kings of Midian. This conducts us to the death of Moses. After having numbered the people, ordered the distribution of the promised land, and appointed Joshua his successor, in the sight of all Israel, he ascended the mountain, which he descended no more. He saw the promised land, he reviewed his journey in the wilderness, and he resigned his spirit “to God who gave it.”

We cannot take leave of Moses, without paying one small tribute of respect to his character, and to his conduct. From the sacred records, we learn that he was beautiful in his person, and amiable in his disposition. He received a polished education, and on all occasions evinced true greatness of mind. Consider him as a prophet or as a general, as a shepherd or as a monarch, as a husband or as a father, as a man or as a saint, he is equally estimable, and equally inter-

esting. A greater than Moses did not appear upon the earth, till "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld *his* glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." His death, as well as his life, breathes instruction. It shews us the danger of contending with God, and the bitterness of disappointment, when an object ardently desired is seen, but not permitted to be enjoyed. It is an emblem of the death of a Christian, who, in his last moments, in the same way, casts his eyes over the past and the future. In one word, living and dying, he was a most inestimable character: and well did he merit the tears, which "the many thousands of Israel" shed to his memory.

The tents of Israel were pitched at Shittim, during the days of mourning for Moses: and, encamped on the verge of Jordan, the people expected the divine signal for passing that river.\* Nor could any thing less than a divine command have encouraged Joshua and the Israelites to proceed. All circumstances considered, we think it would have been a greater miracle, had they encountered the dangers which they were conscious were before them, *without* a divine communication, than the admission of the fact asserted in the scriptures, that they *knew* themselves acting under the authority and support of a divine commission, supposes. Joshua was ninety-three years of age. He was indeed at the head of six hundred thousand fighting men: but his army was also encumbered with women, children, servants, cattle, and all the necessities for travelling. The nations who opposed him were numerous, warlike, of gigantic stature and strength:

\* For the succeeding statements, see the book of Joshua. See also *Anc. Univ. Hist.* Vol. III. b. i. chap. 7.

their towns fortified by nature, and by art: their forces concentrated, and their interests united by alliances: this union was strengthened by alarm: they had every thing to lose, and with the most determined and steady courage, they resolved to repel the invaders.

After the spies sent by Joshua to inspect the country had returned in peace, preparations were made for passing the river Jordan. This hazardous undertaking, which was to cast the die, and to commence the conflict with the Canaanites, was arranged under the immediate direction of Heaven. The people sanctified themselves, and the priests bearing the ark of God opened the procession. Each tribe observed the same order as they had done in their marches. The enterprise commenced on a day which answers to the thirtieth of our April, the day on which the paschal lamb was selected and separated. At this time of the year, Jordan usually overflowed its banks, from the melting of the snows of Lebanon, and of other neighboring mountains.—But so soon as the feet of the priests, who bare the ark, touched the waves of this rapid river, God caused the stream to roll back: and it stood in heaps far beyond the city of Adam, while the flood below continuing its course to the Dead Sea, opened a passage of about sixteen or eighteen miles in breadth, for the armies of Israel, till they had passed over. The priests who had continued in the bed of the river till the whole army had crossed, now remained while twelve stones were set up which might be seen on either shore when the waters were abated, and until twelve stones, taken out of the channel, were piled on the other side of the river. They then ascended to the opposite shore, and Jordan, with its wonted impetuosity, rolled its stream towards the Dead Sea.

After this miraculous passage, the passover was celebrated for the *third* time. Jericho was soon after taken in an extraordinary manner; and the account of its capture, is abundantly strengthened, by the fulfilment of a most remarkable prophecy uttered at the time. Joshua predicted, when it was rased to the ground, that whosoever should attempt to rebuild it, should "lay the foundations thereof in his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son."—This curse was literally fulfilled above five hundred and fifty years after it was denounced. Hiel, the Bethelite, attempted to rebuild it: but "he laid the foundation thereof in Abiran, his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub," who both died in consequence of the trespass of their father. After the death of Achan, the conquest of the land was effected in about six years.

In the battle against the five kings who fought against Gibeon, two miracles are recorded: the assistance afforded the Israelites by a fall of hailstones, and the standing still of the sun and moon at the command of Joshua. For the first of these, we observe that it is *now* no uncommon thing to read of a storm literally of stones, which probably was the case in this tempest of Joshua: and these phenomena have been attributed to earthquakes, eruptions, and various causes. The miracle then, consists in the timing of this awful storm, and the direction of its fury against the enemies of Israel. For the standing still of the sun and moon, we conceive that this miracle does not militate against the present system of astronomy, since the suspension of the earth's motion would produce the same appearances, and not only the sun and moon, but all the planets, would necessarily seem to

be stationary. As this last was a miracle, conspicuous not merely to the enemies with whom they fought, but to all nations, it must have been to the Canaanites, a most afflictive demonstration, that the hand of God was against them, and with their enemies; and thus is the design, the propriety, and the necessity, of this miracle, at once demonstrated. Thus by little and little the whole land was subdued, till the Israelites obtained complete possession; and before he closed his eyes in death, Joshua divided the whole country among the several tribes, and beheld the final accomplishment of the promise, which God had made, so many centuries before, to Abraham. Having brought into as narrow compass as possible the statement of these facts according to the scriptures,

II. WE SHALL SET BEFORE YOU SUCH FOREIGN TESTIMONIES AS APPEAR TO US CALCULATED TO ELUCIDATE AND TO CONFIRM THIS ACCOUNT.

We shall produce,

I. POSITIVE EVIDENCE FROM THE MOST ANCIENT WRITERS, either relative to particular facts, or to the circumstances attending them. The birth of Moses, his deliverance from the water, and his receiving the moral law, is selected by EUSEBIUS out of ARISTOBULUS. The ancient writer of the ORPHIC verses, after asserting that only one God is to be worshipped as the Creator and Governor of the world, adds, "So was it said of old: so he commands, who was born of water, and who received of God the two great tables of the moral law." STRABO applauds Moses for reproofing the error of the Egyptians in likening the Deity to beasts. JUVENAL mentions the adherence of the Jews to their law "given by Moses." As a writer he is

spoken of by DIODORUS SICULUS, PLINY, and TACITUS; and they regard his history with great respect. We have already seen that LONGINUS quotes the opening of Genesis, as an instance of the true sublime. CHALCIDIUS borrowed many things from the writings of Moses, whom he calls "the wisest of men, enlivened not by human eloquence, but by divine inspiration." HERMIPPAS, in his life of Pythagoras, quoted by Josephus against Apion, says, that "he took many things into his own philosophy from the Jewish laws." Ancient writers in general conspire to speak highly of the piety of the Jews, so long as they adhered to the law. These testimonies furnish a most decisive evidence, both of the antiquity of the Mosaic writings, and of the estimation in which his history was held\*. The EGYPTIANS imitated the Urim and Thummim, mentioned in the ceremonial laws: for DIODORUS says, that the chief justice "carries on his neck an image of precious stones, suspended on a golden chain." The heathen POETS assert that Jupiter overwhelmed the enemies of Hercules in ARIM, which is precisely the country where Joshua fought with the children of Anak, by "a tempest of stones." Moreover it appears credible that the fables current in the heathen world, of the protraction of the day and of the night, attributed to their deities, as their pleasure, or their convenience required, originated in the fact of the miracle wrought by Joshua, in arresting the light of the sun and moon.

The establishment of the Jews in Canaan, as a fact, cannot be questioned. They long made it the seat of empire. Skepticism itself admits the existence of the

\* Grotius de Ver. Relig. Christ. § 16. See also note 1, of this Lecture, at the end of the volume.

nations which preceded Israel: but objects to the conduct of Joshua in dispossessing them of their territories.

The testimonies which we have adduced confirm the Mosaic history *as a whole*, rather than *detached parts* of it; and surely when it is considered, as it has been clearly proved by Josephus on the testimony of MANETHO,\* that the settlement of the Jews in Canaan was three hundred and ninety-three years before Danaus came to Argos, whom the Grecians acknowledge their most ancient prince, and from whom they are frequently named; and that it preceded the transactions of Troy, celebrated by their most ancient poet, a thousand years; particular confirmations of such striking events as the deluge, and a general acquiescence with the scripture record, is all that ought to be, and all that can be, expected from heathen writers. They could not know any thing of these circumstances but by tradition. ORPHEUS himself lived but one thousand years before Christ; HESIOD, nine hundred; HOMER, eight hundred and fifty. Orpheus himself, therefore, was only contemporary with Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. The settlement in Canaan took place one thousand four hundred and twenty-seven years before the birth of our Lord: that is, four hundred and twenty-seven years before Hesiod: and five hundred and seventy-seven years before the celebrated Homer. Is it a subject for wonder that obscurity should rest upon facts so ancient? We appeal to the unprejudiced—is it not rather extraordinary, that facts so remote should have evidences so strong and decisive? We wish to produce,

\* See note 2, of this Lecture, at the end of the volume.

## 2. CONSIDERATIONS WHICH MAY BE DEEMED CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCES.

When the law was given at Sinai, it was given publicly. Nothing was done in secret. Peculiar glory, splendor, and notoriety, attended its dispensation. It was not a meeting of the chiefs of the nation, who reported to the people that such an appearance had been manifested to them. No! the whole camp witnessed the magnificent scene. They were not asleep when God descended in terrible majesty. They were awake to every transaction, when they prostrated themselves on the ground, and cried, "Let not God speak to us, lest we die." Moses could not impose on their senses. Is it probable, had not the Israelites actually seen "this great sight," and had they not been completely convinced that Moses was forty days and forty nights upon Mount Sinai, and that he really did receive the law from the hand of God,—is it probable that they would have submitted to the moral, and especially to the ceremonial laws, many of which were opposite both to their opinions, and to their ancient customs? The adherence of the Jews to their law in every age, is an incontestable proof that *they* believe the fact of the manner in which it was given; and how was it possible for Moses to deceive their fathers, in those things of which they were eye and ear-witnesses? We say nothing respecting the morality, the equity, and the perfection of the moral law, which demonstrates that God alone could be its author. Compared with it, all the admired codes of the wisest legislators of antiquity are barbarous. We waive this, and simply ask a question, which we challenge infidelity to answer, if it be able. A man may pretend to a revelation, without having it, as did Mahomet: but the case before us is widely dif-

ferent. Here is no secrecy, or concealment; here are no visions or dreams. The cloud, the fire, the trumpet, the darkness, were seen and heard by all the camp of Israel. They were prepared for the event by purification. Moses ascended in their presence, and descended before them. They saw his fears: they saw the tables of the law taken up, plain, ungraven stone: they saw them when they were brought down, filled. Events were recorded at the moment in which they took place: his history was in the hands of his contemporaries; and his law was publicly read at stated periods. We ask, how was it possible for him to impose, in the first instance, upon the Jews? We are reduced to this alternative. Either we must give up the history of Moses (corroborated as it is by foreign testimonies) altogether: we must believe his book a forgery from first to last: we must even deny the existence of the Jewish nation at that period: or we must admit his miracles as matters of fact; since he could no more impose the *manner* of the giving of the law, than the *law itself*, upon the Jews. Admit that the law was given, and that he is the author of these books, and you must to be consistent, admit all its circumstances.

Respecting the manna, the pillar of cloud and of fire, and other miraculous circumstances attending their journey, was it possible to have imposed the belief of these things upon the progenitors of the Jews (through whose hands these writings were transmitted from generation to generation) unless they really existed? Was it possible to persuade the multitude, that they were every day fed from heaven, for the space of forty years, had not this actually been the case? And without a miraculous supply, how could Moses march

such an army, through such a country, except he possessed an enormous magazine of provisions? And from what sources could he derive it?

Whence arose the various customs of the Jews perpetuated to the present hour, if they did not originate in facts such as he records? What could give rise to the passover? What could have suggested the various ceremonies of the Jewish worship? Was not the brazen serpent in existence in the days of Hezekiah? What has preserved these singular institutions in every age, and in every country? They must have had some origin. We admire two things in the divine government: the one—the perpetuation of miracles till after the coming of Christ, so that every fresh miracle confirmed former ones: the other—the continuation of the rites of the Jews down to the present hour. Were it not from the circumstance of the rejection of the Savior by the Jews, and their consequent obstinate adherence to their ceremonial law, perhaps it would be denied that such rites ever existed. In this we cannot but perceive the wisdom of Providence, amid all its obscurity. Could a whole nation, from first to last, be deceived? Impossible! I never see a Jew, without feeling conviction of the truth of divine revelation.

The reservation of some of the Canaanites for several ages, and the total extermination of them having never been effected, was a decisive evidence to succeeding generations, who were not eye-witnesses of the entrance of their fathers into Canaan, both of the existence, and of the manners, of its former inhabitants; and, by consequence, a confirmation of all the records put into their hands. This doubtless was one important reason why they were not all destroyed.

Once again—the reference which all the writings of Moses had to the Messiah, forms a part of that grand and unbroken chain, which runs through the whole volume of scripture, from first to last, and which renders it impossible to take away any part without destroying the beauty, and affecting the existence, of all.

### III. WE SHALL NOTICE THE OBJECTIONS WHICH SKEPTICISM HAS RAISED AGAINST THIS PART OF THE SACRED WRITINGS.

1. THEY OBJECT TO THE CONDUCT OF THE ISRAELITES AS IMMORAL. They have compared the settlement of the Jews in Canaan, to the cruelty of the Spaniards in Mexico, and have asserted, that the one had as little right as the other, to dispossess the original inhabitants of these respective places, of their territories. Before the writings of Moses are condemned altogether on these plausible pretences, we shall interpose a series of propositions drawn up by a most able hand,\* which we think are unanswerable, but upon which you will form your own conclusions. They are as follows: "That the Almighty has a sovereign right over the lives and fortunes of his creatures: That the iniquity of nations, may become such as to justify him in destroying those nations: That he is free to choose the instruments by which he will effect such destruction: That there is not more injustice or cruelty, in effecting it by the sword, than by famine, pestilence, whirlwind, deluge, and earthquake: that the circumstance of a divine commission entirely alters the state of the case, and distinguishes the Israelites from the Spaniards, or any other plunderers, as much as a warrant from the magistrate distinguishes the executioner from the murderer:

\* Bishop Horne.

That men may be assured of God's giving such a commission: And there is incontestable evidence upon record, and from facts, that the Israelites were thus assured." We think it will require no small degree of skill, to overturn propositions so reasonable, and so admirably dependant upon each other.

2. THEY OBJECT TO IT AS CRUEL: on account of the slaughter of children. 'This is an argument produced on every occasion in which the Bible records human desolation. We have again to remind them, that, on this principle, they ought to quarrel with famine, and earthquakes, and all the scourges of nature; and not only so, but with the natural stroke of death, by which thousands of children are destroyed every day. In a word, if the security and tranquillity of infants be the reasonable result of their freedom from actual offence, we must arrive at this point, that they ought in justice to be delivered from the infliction of all evil; and thus must we either deny the experience of every day, which exhibits children suffering pains and sorrows incessantly, or habitually dispute the justice, and the goodness, of God, in the government of the world.

3. THEY OBJECT TO IT AS IMPROPER. They assert, that God should not use instruments, who might be *hardened* by the execution of their commission. In every point of view the case was different with the Jews. It was *not* effected, said the text justly, by their "own sword," and by their "own bow:" but by the "hornet," and by a series of miracles, which plainly demonstrated the interposition of Providence. Moreover, the execution of their commission, was not calculated to harden their hearts against any thing but sin; and was designed as an awful lesson of caution to

themselves: since they were expressly assured, that the same vices would draw upon them the same displeasure, expose them inevitably to the same calamities, and drown them in the same perdition.

The history which has passed under review, affords a striking exemplification of divine fidelity and purity, and of the harmony and success of all the designs of God. Whatever is difficult and obscure, this is plain and luminous: whatever in Providence is calculated to impress awe and terror, this excites only the emotions of admiration and delight.

It is pleasant to observe, amid the caprices, and the fluctuations, of human purposes, the undivided, and unshaken plans of Jehovah, hastening with undeviating perseverance to their completion. Man commences operations to-day, which he abandons to-morrow. Either the difficulties that present themselves are insurmountable, or he is weary of the length of way which is between him and the attainment of his wishes, or some new object is started, or he is interrupted by death: from some cause or other, it is seldom that his purpose is accomplished. He began to build, but either he had not counted the cost, or not well chosen the ground, or through lack of materials, or workmen, the tools fell from his hand, and the unfinished edifice stands a lasting monument of the folly, the poverty, or the caprice, of the architect. It is not so with the Deity. No difficulty can impede his designs: he commands, and the mountain becomes a plain. No length of time can frustrate his wishes: for time is swallowed up before him. That which his will purposes, is, in his estimation, accomplished: for, to him, the distance between the plan and its execution, is annihilated. A thousand "years with the Lord are as one

day"—“a thousand ages, as yesterday when it is past.” No new object can distract his attention, and lead him aside from his original purpose: for “he is of one mind, and who can turn him?” and “he seeth the end from the beginning.” Death cannot interrupt his operations: for with him is “neither beginning of days nor end of life.” He counts the cost, and lays the foundation of the edifice, deep and lasting: he furnishes materials, and raises up workmen to prosecute his designs; and although these “cannot continue by reason of death,” as they drop the tools, he puts them into the hands of others! One strikes a blow or two with the hammer, and drives a nail: another spreads the mortar, places “one stone upon another,” leaves it to cement, and falls asleep: a third pursues the process; and amid the removal of the laborers, the building of God continues to rise, till “the topstone is brought forth with shouting.”

It is pleasant to see the Deity superintending the deliberations of those who acknowledge him not, and from their chaos causing a beautiful creation to spring to light. In the midst of senates, of privy councils, and of camps, the invisible God presides. The conqueror knows him not, and the assembly think not of *him*, who is in the midst of them. Short-sighted and bewildered in their plans, *their* schemes are dictated by the exigencies of the moment: but *he* is making them the instruments of fulfilling his pleasure. They wish to shake the power of this and that empire, to check the insolent rapacity of an unprincipled tyrant, to extend their own political interests, or to add such a tract of country, and such a distant possession, to their own dominion. They form alliances, and

project enterprises: he sanctions, or crushes, these, as he sees fit—still pursuing his own eternal purposes.

It is pleasant to see the gradual developement of his plans, and the regular succession of events, which accomplish them. He is “a God of order, and not of confusion.” Nothing is premature, nothing is retarded, nothing is out of place. All is concord, co-operation, utility, beauty, stability.

It will be pleasant hereafter to see the accomplishment of the whole scheme. So transient is our present existence, that a very small portion of the divine plans can fall within its narrow compass. In a few instances, like the present, the records of truth enable us to form some conception of the operations of God, and the history is the counterpart of the prediction. But when we shall have subdued our enemies, and completed our wanderings in the wilderness: when we shall have passed Jordan, and taken possession of our heavenly Canaan: we shall compare the prediction, the event, and its consequences together: and with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, raise the shout of triumph in the kingdom of God!

## LECTURE X.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE JEWS—INCLUDING THE THEOCRACY AND MONARCHY, TO THE BUILDING OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE: WITH A CONFIRMATION OF SOME SUBORDINATE FACTS.

1 SAM. viii, 6—10 & 19, 20.

*But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, give us a king to judge us: and Samuel prayed unto the Lord; And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods; so do they also unto thee. Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit, yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them. And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people, that asked of him a king. —Nevertheless, the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay, but we will have a king over us: That we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.*

ACTS VII. 44—48.

*Our Fathers had the Tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto*

*Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen. Which also our fathers that came after, brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David. Who found favor before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. But Solomon built him an house. Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands.*

HEB. XI, 32—34.

*And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Sampson, and of Jephthæ, of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets. Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.*

WHATEVER be the views of man respecting the veracity of the scriptures, it must be admitted that the subjects of which they treat, and upon which they promise elucidation, are to the last degree interesting and important. If there be a God, it is of the first consequence, that we should understand our relation to him, the duties which we owe him, and the service which he requires. The question whether revelation has given us just views on this subject, cannot be solved, except it be in the first instance seriously received, and cautiously examined; and professing to give us decisive information upon these points, it demands respect, it should awaken interest,

it should promote inquiry, and the investigation of its claims, ought to be conducted under the influence of a sincere desire to serve the cause of truth. As it is professedly the production of men of real genius, and displays eloquence and beauty which extort unwilling praise from the lips of its adversaries, it ought not to be treated either with indifference or with contempt. The wisdom manifested, and the good proposed in it, are vastly above ridicule. While it professes to be the word of God, and till the contrary be incontestably proved, it should be approached with respect; and as the subjects it proposes are inseparably connected with our peace, it should be examined with care. It is exceedingly absurd to prejudge a cause which we have not tried, and to condemn a book which we have not read. And yet it is more than probable that the larger number of the opponents of revelation, have not taken the trouble to examine its contents, much less to weigh its evidences. What then are we to think of a man who could sit down to refute a book, which from his own confession he had not read for years; and which, if we may form a judgment upon his injurious and profane production, he had never consulted with attention? When he had occasion to refer to its compositions, not possessing a Bible of his own, and not willing to re-examine the production which he so virulently, and on such slender ground, condemned, he was compelled to substitute a poetical paraphrase for the simple language of the scriptures! Is this candor? Is this liberality? Is this fair and impartial criticism? If it be, may infidelity ever enjoy the triumph of possessing it: we neither envy, nor desire to share such honors: we are satisfied that the glory shall be all their own. If we would find out truth,

the pretensions of this book must be fairly examined, and *that* examination should be made with a mind removed as remotely as possible, from the influence of prejudice. Wherever the truth shall eventually be found to lie, its cause will not have been served by those on either side, who have prosecuted their researches with indolence, or drawn their conclusions without candor.

The present Lecture is a resting-point, and from its nature, induces us to survey the ground which we have already trodden. We have advanced step by step through the Jewish history, from the calling of their great progenitor Abraham, to their complete establishment in Canaan. What important lessons arise out of this long chain of historical events! what examples of piety! what trials of patience! what exercises of faith! what elucidations of providence! what evidences of divine veracity! Abraham received the promise of a son at the advanced age of an hundred years; and the accomplishment of the prediction was the dawn of the fidelity of God. When this patriarch died, he left behind him, for his son, no inheritance in Canaan, "no, not so much as to set his foot on"—the "cave of the field of Machpelah" excepted; and *that*, he held by purchase, and not as the gift of heaven. Did this appear like the possession of the promised land by his descendants? Yet in tracing successive events through all their windings, revelation has furnished us with decisive evidences as the result of our inquiries, that all these promises were fulfilling in their order, and that they actually did receive their complete accomplishment. Through the envy of his brethren the favorite son of Jacob was sold into Egypt. By a most extraordinary combination of events, the little Hebrew captive was seated upon the throne of the kingdom,

next to the monarch himself. A famine prevailing in Canaan drove his relatives into Egypt. There he had an opportunity of making himself known to those who had so grievously persecuted him; and his father, partly urged by necessity, and strongly impelled by parental affection, went down, with all his household, and settled in Egypt. This was the third generation from Abraham. The lapse of years swept them all away; and, according to the prediction, his "seed became strangers in a strange land." As it had been foretold, their bondage was most severe and cruel; and at the exact period of time fixed, under the conduct of Moses, they were delivered from their servitude. Many years were spent in wandering through the wilderness: till at length, the delay occasioned by their transgressions being removed, they obtained possession of Canaan. At this point are we arrived; and the inferences deducible from this series of history are obvious, and important. It is evident that HE "sees the end from the beginning," who predicted the establishment of the Israelites in Canaan, four hundred years before it took place, and at a time when every thing appeared to oppose the designs of Deity, and to conspire to shake the faith of Abraham. We have seen positive good arising out of apparent evil, and the purposes of God accomplished by the most unlikely instruments. We are certain, admitting the statement of facts as laid down in the scriptures, that there is a God that ruleth in the earth; and that no hand, but the hand of Omnipotence, could have brought events so extraordinary to pass. We have seen every thing give way before a people conducted by the agency of heaven; and are led irresistibly to conclude, that the time, the manner, the instruments, were all selected

and ordained, by the most consummate wisdom. We are taught never to despair when we have a divine leader, never to murmur when events seem adverse to our expectations, never to waver when the promise appears remote in its accomplishment, and never to draw conclusions till Deity has completed his designs. If the consideration of these facts, shall have strengthened the faith of one Christian, or furnished a single solution of the mysteries of Providence, we shall not have recited the Jewish history in vain.

A new path is marked out for us this evening. We have not to lead your attention through a long succession of historical events, so much as to enter into a necessary discussion of the government of the Jews, connected remotely with some general passages of their later chronicles, and immediately, with that great event, the building of their splendid temple, one of the wonders of the world: The subject stands thus worded in the list—THE GOVERNMENT OF THE JEWS—INCLUDING THE THEOCRACY, AND MONARCHY, TO THE BUILDING OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE; to which we shall subjoin A CORROBORATION OF SOME SUBORDINATE FACTS, not of sufficient importance to demand a separate Lecture. We begin with

#### I. THE THEOCRACY OF THE JEWS.

An inquiry into the rise of government, and a survey of the gradual advance of power, is neither uninteresting, nor unnecessary, in the Lecture of this evening.

The first form of government appears to have been THE PARENTAL, and THE PATRIARCHAL. The father had a natural claim upon the affections and the obedience of his children. They were united to him by

sacred and indissoluble ties. Man is not happy alone: in every period of life he stands connected with others; and his interests are linked with theirs. In society there must be an head, a leader, a guide, to whom the eye can look up, and upon whom the heart can rely. In the earliest state of nature man felt the force of this truth; and who could appear to him so suited for this office, and so capable of this responsibility, as the friend, and the "guide of his youth?" Where could they select one so attached to their persons, to their interests, and to their general welfare? The bonds of nature were strengthened by those of the judgment and its obligations confirmed by choice. The decisions of the heart were ratified by the conviction of the understanding; and in those early ages, the characters of the parent, and of the patriarch, were blended. Their children yielded reverence to their age, attachment to their tenderness, and obedience to their requisitions. Then the parent was the priest, and the king, of his family. His wife, his children, his servants, all looked up to him as their natural and legitimate ruler, and his authority was not disputed. Behold him kneeling before the common altar, with hallowed hands stretched towards heaven, imploring family, and individual, mercies! Did the demon of discord creep in among them? and were the marks of dissatisfaction, alienation, and disunion imprinted upon their countenances? they laid their differences at his paternal feet, and from his decision they made no appeal. Providence conspired with nature to compel them to hold the will of a parent sacred; and the punishment of Cain, the disobedient and the murderer, would ever be before the eyes of the first race of mankind. Even in a later age, Esau, abandoned as he was to work all

iniquity with greediness, and deterred by no sense of shame from the commission of evil, when he had it in his heart to murder his brother, resolved to wait till the days of mourning for his father should be accomplished, who apparently was gradually sinking into the grave. This fratricide in his heart dared not to perpetrate his horrible design under the paternal roof, and before his father's face. The sons of Jacob, when they sold their brother, presumed not to enter into their father's presence, but with a tale to deceive him: they did not dare to risk the dreadful crime of bringing down his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave, openly and avowedly. And time aided these impressions of reverence which nature dictated, and Providence confirmed, and custom established. In that early period, when the years of a man's life were extended to so great a length, the exercise of parental authority reached to several generations. Paternal dignity acquired strength by years. The most tender affections were chastened by the most awful respect. The younger laid their hand upon their mouth, and were silent before venerable age; and they said, "Days should speak, and the multitude of years should teach wisdom." Blessed rule! which perpetually held in view the interests of those who voluntarily submitted to its directions. Blessed government! where the father was the prince, where parental affection softened patriarchal authority, and where filial love was blended with cheerful submission, and with respectful obedience. Blessed times! when the interests of men were one and undivided, and when no arbitrary and cruel despotism blotted the primeval reign. Happy are those countries, which like our own, approach the nearest to this picture of ancient simplicity in their government:

where authority suppresses anarchy, where liberty limits power, and where the prince, consulting only the interests, reigns always in the hearts of his willing and obedient people!

As men multiplied upon the face of the earth, the relations of human life branched into various, and widely-extended ramifications. The field of authority became every day larger; and in a family which once was one, but now was divided into many, some were found who would not bow to patriarchal restraint: of course, as in the present day, there were distinct heads to separate families, and a form of government was wanting which should embrace the whole. Here was a scene opened to ambition! The man of bold, daring, enterprising genius, pressed on to gain the dangerous summit of pre-eminence over his brethren. After the flood we first read of NIMROD. Whether he were a tyrant or not, according to our usage of the word, has been the subject of much discussion; and the scriptural account of him is too short to admit the question to be decided with any degree of precision. It is clear, however, that by some means he acquired a considerable ascendancy over his brethren; and "began to be great in the earth. He is the same with Belus, who was afterwards worshipped as a God under that name." He was the grandson of Noah, and is termed in the scriptures "a mighty hunter before the Lord." By this laborious exercise, probably, he gained the affections of the people, in delivering them from the dangers arising from the too great increase of beasts of prey; while, at the same moment, he trained up the young men "to endure hardness." The habitual command which on these occasions he assumed, and the habits of obedience which they acquired,

probably, enabled him to establish, and to maintain, the unbounded authority which he, at length exercised. It is said that "he began to be mighty in the earth;" by which phrase we are probably to understand, that he procured himself settlements, founded cities, blended different families, united the people under his own authority, and moulded them into one state. His original dominion was bounded by the Euphrates and the Tigris: but in the revolution of years, and by gradual acquisitions, it was much enlarged, and became one of the four great empires of the world. Babylon was the seat of his kingdom: afterwards he built Nineveh, which he so denominated from his son Ninus, and laid the foundation of the Assyrian empire.\* Thus the PATRIARCHAL government became MONARCHICAL.

But men began to forsake the precepts delivered to them by their fathers, and to deny, or to forget, the God who made them. The CONFUSION OF TONGUES separated and scattered the people, and this dispersion was the origin of nations. When idolatry had spread itself extensively, perhaps we might say universally, it pleased God to call Abraham, and to choose his family, and his descendants, as his own PECULIAR people. This nation was selected as a public evidence of the existence, and of the providence of God—was set up as a perpetual admonition to the world. We have seen them crowned with visible prosperity under his extraordinary guardianship: and we have contemplated singular, and public manifestations, of the divine interposition in their favor. Should any be disposed to question the fact of this choice, and of this guar-

\* See Rollin's Anc. Hist. vol. ii, p. 178, &c.

dianship, they must be silenced by the demonstration of the same providence, and of the same care, exerted in favor of the same people, to the present hour. After a dispersion of eighteen centuries over the face of the whole earth, held every where in contempt, existing in a state of the most abject ignominy, they still remain, in incredible numbers, unmixed with, although subsisting in the midst of, all other nations, and totally distinct and separate from all the inhabitants of the globe. And while this undeniable fact is a decisive proof of the divine choice of them as a people, this extraordinary interposition of Heaven on their behalf, is also a standing miracle in favor of revelation. They have been harassed, detested, persecuted, massacred in all countries, by all ranks: yet have they seen the rise, and the fall, of many imperial nations, which held them in servitude, and which shook the oppressor's rod over their head; and in this forlorn, wandering, wretched, and apparently abandoned state, they remain a people, and a great people.

From this choice, and upon the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, arose the MOSAIC OR LEVITICAL DISPENSATION; and the government under this dispensation was a THEOCRACY. This term is compounded of two Greek words Θεός *God*, and κυβέω *to govern*; and implies that the Jews were immediately under the authority of God as their king. To elucidate this assertion we remark, that, in three distinct views, God may be considered as the God of the Hebrews:

1. *As the great Parent of all men*—the Ruler of the hearts, the properties, the lives, and the affairs of the creation at large, and of the Jews as a PART of the creation. This is a relation which he bears to them in common with all the world. Hence he required of the Israelites all the duties of the light of nature, and

of the moral law, which binds all mankind as well as themselves, and extends through every dispensation.

2. *As the God of Israel peculiarly*, as a visible and outward CHURCH, whom he had selected, and separated from all other nations, to be his own peculiar people. Hence he prescribed forms and modes of worship: he instituted ceremonies and rites of religion, by which their devotional exercises were regulated, as tokens of their duty, and of his relation to them, as a chosen and distinct people.

3. *As their proper and only King*, as a NATION. Hence he gave them judicial and political laws, relating to their government, their constitution, and the several relations and branches of society. Whoever will review with attention the Mosaic law, will find that there are not only moral obligations laid down, but ceremonial and ritual observances prescribed; and these again are connected with political and judicial commands: so that it is evident that the Jews were as much under the direction of Heaven in their civil, as in their religious laws and institutions. Hence there are four words, which are frequently deemed synonymous, but which in the scriptures have very distinct significations—"statutes, commandments, judgments, and testimonies"—and these set the several relations of God to the Jews, and particularly the theocracy, in a clear point of view.

"STATUTES," were such institutions as had their foundation in the will and pleasure of God as a *Sovereign*, and for which no particular reason on any other ground could be assigned: such as "not to sow two seeds of different kinds together."

"COMMANDMENTS," were *moral* duties, for which the reasons were manifest, such as "not to steal,"

"JUDGMENTS," were the laws belonging to *civil* government, in things between man and man: such as are laid down in Exodus, the twenty-first and the following chapters.

"TESTIMONIES," were such laws as preserved the remembrance of some great events, and *testified* to the peculiar goodness of God: such as the sabbath, the passover, and all the feasts.

In giving his last charge to his son Solomon, David enumerates these several branches of divine jurisdiction: "keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his STATUTES, and his COMMANDMENTS, and his JUDGMENTS, and his TESTIMONIES, as it is written in the law of Moses." And thus was the relation of God to Israel, not merely a common one, such as he bears to all men: but a peculiar one, such as he never had to any people, themselves excepted.

That such a connexion *did* subsist between God and Israel, is clearly deducible from the EPITHETS bestowed upon that nation, throughout the scriptures. Because he singled them out from all other nations, he is expressly said to CHOOSE them. "The Lord had a delight in thy fathers, and he *chose* their seed after them, even *you*, above all people\*."

In consequence of this selection, he brought them up out of the land of Egypt, and they are said to have been DELIVERED†, SAVED‡, PURCHASED||, REDEEMED¶.

He is said to CALL them: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and *called* my son out of Egypt§."

He is said to CREATE them, to GIVE THEM LIFE, to have BEGOTTEN them\*\*.

\* Deut. x. 15.

|| Deut. xxxii. 6.

† Exod. iii. 8.

¶ Deut. vii. 8.

‡ Deut. xxxiii. 29.

§ Hosea, xi. 1.

\*\* Is. xliii. 1. 7. Ezek. xvi. 3. Deut. xxxii. 18.

He is called their FATHER. "Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy *Father* that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee†?"

These several scriptural terms imply a peculiar relation, a connexion far more intimate than the common relation of God to the creation at large, and totally distinct from it.

Under the theocracy, RULERS were appointed: but these were selected by God himself, as may be observed in respect of all the judges; and they did nothing but expressly under divine commission. In every movement, and in every plan, the will of God was consulted. The theocracy commenced with Moses, and closed with Samuel, after having subsisted through a period of four hundred and seventy-six years.

The rule of Samuel, as an elder of Israel, lasted twenty-one years, at the close of which time old age stole upon him, and wishing to relinquish the cares of government, or at least to divide them, a portion of his authority was vested in the person of his sons, and they became judges. So far from copying the inflexible integrity of their father, we find them delineated in all the features of covetousness and of oppression: they "took bribes," and "perverted judgment." For a season the Israelites patiently endured their wrongs: but at length their spirit was stirred within them to resist and to crush this tyranny. The blameless method of doing this, had been to make their appeal to their divine Monarch, and to have entreated Samuel, under the direction of heaven, to elect other, and upright rulers. But instead of this, they rejected the divine

† Deut. xxxii, 6, &c.

authority, so far as their power extended, they insisted upon an intire new form of government, and resolved, like other nations, to have "a king to reign over them." Deity granting them their wishes, the theocracy ceased, and their government became monarchical.\* Our next object in this Lecture is to present some account of

## II. THE MONARCHY OF THE JEWS.

The princes of Israel possessed great power, and in later ages, before the coming of Christ, it was exceedingly abused, as in the case of Ahab, Manasseh, and several others.

It is evident that this change in the government was displeasing to God: for it is said, "He gave them a king in his anger, and took him away in his wrath;" and it is an inquiry worthy attention, what was the ground of this displeasure? I conceive that it was not the change of government as it respects the nomination of a king instead of a ruler, but the choosing of a king so far as in their power, to the exclusion of God; and on this principle he said to Samuel, "They have not rejected *thee*, but they have rejected ME, that I

\* When we speak of the termination of the theocracy with Samuel, and at the commencement of the monarchy, we do not mean to insinuate, that the divine superintendence of the affairs of the Jewish nation ceased, or that God was less their governor, or that his relation to them was less intimate, and peculiar, than before. The fact is, their very kings were merely rulers of a different description, subjected to the same control, and held by the same authority, as the judges under the theocracy. Hence we see one rejected, and another chosen, one set up and another cast down, and the hand of God every where, in the whole machine of the Israelites' government, directing, regulating, and giving impulse to every wheel, every spring, every movement. Nor has his peculiar relation to the Jews, his immediate superintendence of their concerns, and his miraculous guardianship of their persons, and of their interests, terminated to this hour. All that we mean to convey is, that the theocracy ceased to be the external and ostensible government of the Jews: that continuing to exist, it was in a different shape; and that as it respects its form, their executive power became monarchical.

should not reign over them." Their criminality consisted in placing a man on the throne of the Deity, and in exalting a creature to the seat, which had, till that time, been occupied only by the Creator. Not any form of government is opposed in this declaration: but its force is directed against the presumption of the Israelites in rejecting a divine Governor. Their situation was peculiar—was unlike that of all other nations; and they were not at liberty, on just principles, to make so material an alteration in their government without first consulting God, and having the sanction of his authority. So far from consulting him, it appears from the whole history, that they insisted upon having a king, in opposition to the divine will, and in defiance of all the consequences which Samuel foretold.

At the expiration of the theocracy, Saul was privately anointed king, and afterwards publicly proclaimed at Mizpeh. From the time of his anointing, to his death in Gilboa, he reigned over Israel forty years. It would not be consistent either with our purpose, or with the time usually allotted to these exercises, to enter into a minute detail of the events of his reign. He drew upon himself the displeasure of God, by disobeying his express command, in relation to the extermination of the Amalekites, whom he had, at the time when they opposed Israel in the wilderness, devoted to utter destruction. From this period to the end of his reign, he is presented to us as an object of pity! It is said, "the spirit of God forsook him, and an evil spirit troubled him." It is probable that we are to understand by these terms, that the immediate direction which he was accustomed to receive from God was withdrawn—"The Lord answered him neither by prophets nor by dreams:" that his wisdom and

prudence forsook him: that he was subject to a wearing, melancholy disorder: that he was given up to his evil passions and inclinations; and that a spirit of envy, hatred, and cruelty, took place of a spirit of uprightness, candor, and mercy. Perhaps actual possession of an evil spirit, such as those so clearly proved in the days of Christ, is to be understood. Josephus so considers it, and describes its operations as superinducing a sensation of suffocation, resembling those emotions which the evangelists describe as attending demoniacal influences: at least a species of *madness* seems intended. David was early introduced at court he had previously been anointed king in private in place of Saul; and while his amiable qualities, and his valor in vanquishing Goliath, drew upon him the affections of the people, they excited the fears, and the hatred, of the jealous monarch, who persecuted him even to the extremities of his kingdom, and aimed at nothing less than his destruction. While the father was seeking the life of this amiable young man, his son was attached to him by the most sincere affection, and "Jonathan loved David as his own soul." Never was the influence, the delicacy, the beauty of friendship, painted by so masterly an hand, as that of the sacred historian on this occasion. To read it unmoved, is to carry in one's bosom a rock of adamant, and not an heart of flesh; and to attempt to heighten its effect, would be as futile and as absurd as to think of adding brighter and softer colors to the radiance, with which the pencil of nature paints the west at sun-set.

Saul at length fell in the field of battle against the Philistines at Gilboa, and (O, the ravages of war!) in the same unhappy conflict, Jonathan perished also.\*

See note 1, of this Lecture, at the end of the volume.

It was upon this melancholy occasion, that his surviving friend wrote that affecting lamentation, which has been the admiration of ages.

“O beauty of Israel, slain upon thy own mountains! How are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon: lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. Ye mountains of Gilboa, on you be neither dew, nor rain, nor fields affording oblations: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, the armor of the anointed with oil.† From the blood of the slain, from the slaughter of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan was not withheld, and the sword of Saul never returned in vain. Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided; they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions. Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet with delights, who put ornaments of gold on your apparel. How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, slain upon thine own mountains! I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan! very pleasant hast thou been unto me! Thy love to me was wonderfull surpassing the love of women! How have the mighty fallen! How have the weapons of war perished!”

David succeeded to the throne of his kingdom, and through a period of forty (or if you reckon from the time in which he was anointed, forty-eight) years, he resigned beloved by the people, and distinguished by Divine favor. Few characters discover so complete a combination of excellence and of defect as that of David. Yet, from first to last, you may trace the

† See note 2, of this Lecture, at the end of the volume.

“man after God’s own heart,” humble, contrite, affectionate, and sincere! Few reigns have discovered greater fluctuations of triumph and of affliction. Amid the glory to which the Israelites were rising under his rule, and the zenith of which they had nearly attained, his life was chequered by trial. He was surrounded by enemies, and engaged in almost perpetual warfare. His domestic peace was destroyed, by the dishonor of his daughter, and by the slaughter of his son who effected it. He was driven from his kingdom by the rebellion of Absalom. A pestilence of three days ravaged his empire, and destroyed seventy thousand persons. And the last moments of a turbulent life, were disturbed, and embittered, by the conspiracy of his son Adonijah against Solomon, whom he had nominated as his successor.

Before his death, David had formed the design of building a temple to God, which was realized by Solomon. He had prepared most of the materials, had drawn up the plan according to Divine instructions, and left full and clear directions to his son respecting it. We entreat your attention, for a few moments, prior to our enlargement on this purpose, till we bring down the monarchy to its close. In the days of Rehoboam, the kingdom of Israel was divided; and two distinct lines of kings succeeded to the thrones of Judah and of Israel. According to the prediction of Jacob, the “sceptre did not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from beneath his feet, till Shiloh came.” The ten tribes of Israel were carried away captive, and have not been heard of from that time to this hour: but the sceptre remained with Judah to the coming of Christ. In the days of the Savior the throne was filled by Herod, who held his power under the Roman

emperor; and soon after the ascension of our Lord, the city of Jerusalem was taken, their temple destroyed, and they themselves dispersed. From that period, they have wandered over the face of the whole earth, "without a king," without a temple, "without an ephod," without a lawgiver, "without a sacrifice," and shall continue to do so, till they acknowledge Messiah the prince, and say—"Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

From the days of Jesus, the kingdom of David has been changed into a spiritual kingdom—a kingdom not possessing worldly splendor, neither supported by temporal power. It has resisted every attack, it has extended over many nations, it must swallow up every empire, it will diffuse itself wide as the world. We must contemplate briefly,

### III. THE BUILDING OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

During the theocracy, the worship of God was conducted in a moveable tabernacle, constructed after the pattern drawn up by God himself, and communicated to Moses in the wilderness: nor was any change introduced into this mode of worship, till the prosperous and glorious reign of Solomon. Till the government of the Jews became an established monarchy, no ideas were entertained of a national temple. It rested with David to form, with the Deity to approve, and with Solomon to execute, this magnificent design. Neither labor, nor expense, were spared, in the erection of this grand building, confessedly the most splendid edifice upon which the sun ever shone. For a minute delineation of this stupendous work, we must refer you to the scriptures themselves; and we have little difficulty in confirming the fidelity of the sacred narrative on this

subject. The fact of the existence and the grandeur of this edifice, is indisputable. It must have been known, while it was building, to all the world; for the report of such a design would spread through all nations. It was known at Tyre, because they furnished workmen in the most beautiful and delicate parts of the structure. It was known to the queen of Sheba, who came to be an eye-witness of the wisdom and of the glory of Solomon. It was known at Babylon, by the report of the armies of Nebuchadnezzar. "After Solomon's temple was built, the temple of Vulcan in Egypt, and others in different places, were founded in imitation of it: just as the oracles of the heathens were imitations of the divine communications made to Israel."\* The temple of Solomon, erected according to the scriptural account, must be admitted as an indisputable fact. The glory of this temple was soon extinguished; and after its destruction the Jews built another, inferior to the former in magnificence: which also has sunk under the ravages of war, and with that whole dispensation, has yielded to a purer, yet less splendid, order of worship.

"Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands:" neither is his presence confined to a single world. To the limited capacity of man, a kingdom is a large possession, a world is an object of infinite importance. Could he ascend to the next planet, he would look down upon it as a shining spark, amid myriads of others, scattered through the regions of space. Were the presence of the Deity confined to this globe, who would renew the blunted horns of the moon? Who would balance yonder wandering worlds? Who would supply the sun with light? Who would feed the everlasting fires of those

\* Bishop Watson's Theological Tracts, vol. v, p. 27.

remote orbs, the suns of other worlds, and the centres of others ystems? Who would diffuse glory and felicity through the heaven of heavens? That quickening presence, that powerful hand, that unsearchable wisdom, that unwearied goodness, that infinite Being, is needed every where at the same moment; is adored through all his works; is felt at the same time sustaining the whole universe; and surely "the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands." It remains that we now corroborate

#### IV. SOME SUBORDINATE SCRIPTURE FACTS.

—To which, however interesting, we cannot afford in our plan, the labor and time of a separate Lecture; and which may with propriety be noticed here.

We have passed over the book of Judges, because it was not immediately connected with the larger events proposed for consideration: but the facts contained in that instructive series of narration, are equally authenticated by foreign testimonies. It will be necessary also to anticipate some other subordinate facts, subsequent in point of time to the subjects discussed this evening, that the thread of those which remain may not be broken, nor more serious and important inquiries interrupted.

The memorial of the actions of Gideon is preserved by SANCHONIATHON, a Tyrian writer, who lived not long after him, and whose antiquity is attested by Porphyry.

From the manner of Jephthae's devoting his daughter, after his victory over the Ammonites, arose the story of the sacrifice of Iphigenia: it being usual with the heathens as ÆLIAN observes, to attribute to their later

heroes, the glory of the actions of those who lived long before.\*

OVID has transmitted to us the account of a feast observed by the ancient Romans in April, the time of the Jewish harvest; in which they let loose foxes with torches fastened to their tails.† Can we doubt that this certainly originated in the history of Sampson? and that it was brought into Italy by the Phenicians? May we not also conclude, that from the treachery discovered in Delilah's treatment of Sampson, arose the history of Nisus, and of his unnatural daughter, who cut off those fatal hairs from the head of her father, upon which his victory and his security depended?‡ The labors of Hercules appear to be but an imperfect copy of the prodigious strength and valor of Sampson: or at least, the facts related of the one, probably suggested the exploits fabled of the other.

Also in the succeeding histories of Israel and Judah, some of the more extraordinary facts are confirmed by foreign testimonies.

The victory of David over the Syrians of Zoba, on the banks of the Euphrates, is preserved by NICHOLAUS DAMASCENUS.

There are monuments extant, which certify the part that Hiram, king of Tyre, took in building the temple of Solomon.

\* *Æl Variæ Historiæ, lib. v. cap. 3.*

† *Cur igitur missæ vinctis ardentia tædis  
Terga ferant vulpes, caussa docenda mihi.*

*Ovid. Fast. lib. iv. l. 681, &c.*

‡ — *Alcathoe, quam Nisus habet; cui splendidus ostro  
Inter honoratos medio de vertice canos  
Crinis inhærebat, magni fiducia regni.*

———— *Thalamos taciturna paternos  
Intrat; et (heu facinus!) fatali nata parentem  
Grine suum spoliât.*

*Ovid. Metam. lib. viii, l. 8—10, et 84—86.*

HERODOTUS records the taking of Jerusalem by the king of Egypt, as stated in the history of Rehoboam's reign. In the same writer may be traced the tradition of the destruction of Senacherib's army, because of his blasphemies against God: which circumstance the Egyptians disguised, as was common with them, to appropriate it to themselves.\*

May we not also suppose that the story of Phaeton originated in some imperfect tradition of the translation of Elijah, in a chariot of fire? It is probable that imagination supplied the want of evidence, in the verses of the poets, and by their alterations and additions, it is easy to account for the remoteness of their fables from this fact, to which, nevertheless, they possibly bear a first relation. But it is difficult to imagine from what other source the tale could arise, and what other event would afford materials for so singular a story.†

The history of Jonah, and the account that he was miraculously preserved three days and three nights in the bowels of the fish, has often excited the ridicule, and employed the wit, of infidelity: yet it is not without its support from heathen testimonies. This singular event is related by LYCOPHRON, and by ÆNEAS GAZEUS, with this variation from the inspired writings, that they call the prophet, Hercules. Neither are we to be surprised at this deviation from the historic veracity of the Bible: for Hercules was the great hero of the ancients; and Tacitus himself acknowledges, that to advance the fame of this distinguished favorite, they do not hesitate to ascribe to him, whatever

\* Herod. lib. ii. cap. 141.

† See, on these confirmations of scriptural truth, Bishop Watson's Theological Tracts, vol. i, p. 355, 356.

is extraordinary or noble in history, to whomsoever the real praise is justly due. They plunder every other celebrated character of all his merit, to adorn their fabled hero with the spoils stolen from truth, and honestly belonging to others. Æneas Gazeus, in Theophrastus, uses these words—"Hercules was saved by a whale swallowing him, when the ship in which he sailed was wrecked."\* How well these circumstances, in their general features, accord with the punishment of Jonah for his disobedience, and with the fearful tempest which preceded it!

MENANDER the historian confirms, in his acts of Ithobal, king of Tyre, the dearth in the days of Ahab, king of Israel, in which Elijah was miraculously preserved by the ravens, and by the widow of Zarephath, and says that by supplication to God it was followed by rain, and by much thunder.†

CYPRIAN, JULIAN, and others, mention the fire which descended from heaven to consume the sacrifice of Elijah.‡

It is unnecessary farther to enlarge upon these subjects: enough has already been produced, to prove to every unprejudiced mind, that the most trivial circumstances of the sacred narrative, even those parts of it which might not be supposed, intimately and materially, to affect the truth and the influence of christianity, are capable of demonstration from the traditions of the heathen world, and from the testimony of their earliest writers.

\* Ὅστις καὶ Ἡρακλῆς ἀδεται, διαρραγίτες τῆς νεῶς ἐφ' ἑσ' ἔπλει, ὑπὸ κητὸς καταποθῆναι καὶ διασωθῆναι.  
Æneas Gazeus Theophrasto.

† Jos. Antiq. Jud. Tom. I. lib. viii, cap. xiii, p. 578. Hudsoni edit.

‡ Grot. de Verit. Rel. Christ. lib. i, sect. xvi, in not. 106. See also note 3 of this Lecture, at the end of the volume.

Brethren, we have led back your attention to the splendor and magnificence of former times. Upon us "the ends of the earth" are come. The fathers are assembled in the world of spirits, and "they without us cannot be made perfect." We have not seen "Solomon in all his glory:" but "a greater than Solomon is here!" In all things Jesus has the pre-eminence. Was Solomon wise? Grace was poured upon the Savior's lips, and he was fairer than the sons of men! Was Solomon mighty? "All power" is given unto Jesus "in heaven and in earth!" Was the dominion of Solomon extensive, and his reign peaceful and prosperous? "The dominion" also of Jesus "is from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth;" "and of his kingdom, and of his peace, there is no end!" Is the renown of Solomon immortal? Of Jesus it is written, "His name shall endure forever; his name shall be continued so long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed!" We have never beheld the magnificence of the temple of Solomon: but in the kingdom of our spiritual Solomon, is a temple not made with hands, where the armies of the redeemed are already congregated, and wait our arrival. Solomon was a servant, but Jesus is a son—"and let the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and amen."

## LECTURE XI.

### THE CAPTIVITIES OF ISRAEL AND OF JUDAH.

The first of these events is recorded in

2 KINGS XVII, 1—6.

*In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, began Hoshea the son Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him. Against him came up Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, and Hoshea became his servant, and gave him presents. And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year: therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison. Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah, and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.*

The second is preserved in

2 CHRON. XXXVI, 14—21.

*Moreover, all the chief of the priests, and the people transgressed very much, after all the abominations of the heathen, and polluted the house of the LORD*

which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place: But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword, in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man, or maiden, or old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand. And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes: all these he brought to Babylon. And they burned the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burned all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. And them that had escaped from the sword, carried he away to Babylon: where they were servants to him, and his sons, until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate, she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.

THE history of empires and of people transmitted from generation to generation, what is it but the record of the human heart? All the scenes of horror which have petrified the spectator in the city and in the field, were drawn first in the imagination of a depraved spirit, before they were exhibited to the world.

We contemplate with dismay a conqueror returning from the battle dyed in blood, and we shudder as we look upon the empurpled plain: but we carry within us, all the frightful passions which gave birth to these cruelties; and in our own bosom, are sown, with unsparing hand, the prolific seeds, of which these tears and this misery are the sad harvest. The most atrocious acts of violence which have disgraced society, were conceived in the bosom of a fellow-worm, before they burst to light. The influence of depravity is felt in the world, but its spring is within us; and every individual bears his proportion of the hidden plague. In the existence of evil, and in the pressure of calamity upon society, we have the symptoms of it; the disease itself is interwoven with our very being, and lurks unseen, while it tyrannizes unresisted, in the human heart. The history of nations, therefore, is but the history of human nature; and it presents a most affecting view of human depravity.

It is the glory and the beauty of sacred history to make us acquainted with *men*, and to disclose to us human feelings. No artificial strokes are used in the delineation of character in this volume. No romantic, unnatural circumstances, are recorded as belonging to the individual selected to raise wonder and to lead captive the fancy: for where miraculous events are asserted, we trace the finger of God, and are no longer surprised, and they bear all the mark of matter of fact, for which some cause is assignable. No false gloss varnishes a depraved disposition. No unreal splendors dazzle and astonish us. All is natural; and feeling ourselves among our brethren in the flesh, correspondent emotions spring up within us, when we perceive them agitated by grief or joy; and we read

our own hearts while the narrative permits us to look into theirs. Whether we are overwhelmed with the perplexities of kingdoms, or are occasionally called to the field of battle; whether we witness the slaughter of our fellow-men, or are involved in the intrigues and policies of worldly courts; or whether we enter the tranquil bosom of a family, and share their domestic comforts and trials, and read in these hallowed pages the same scenes which pass before our eyes every day that we live; we mark, with equal gratification and advantage, the developement of the plans of Providence, in relation both to public and domestic life; and deduce from it some inferences applicable to the dealings of God, with us, as a nation, or as individuals. Who can read the scriptures without feeling that instruction and amusement are combined? Pleasure and religious information intermingle, and are blended. The imagination is captivated, the heart is warmed, the judgment is enlightened, the spirit is refreshed and invigorated.

"Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall," is an admonition of unerring wisdom, the excellence of which is proved in the blotted pages of human apostacy. We have seen Solomon building an house for God, enjoying a superiority of understanding over the whole human race, exulting in divine intercourse, crowned with riches and with honor, and extending his dominion from sea to sea. Fair is the aspect of piety, and we hang over it, unwilling to withdraw our enchanted attention from it! The morning of his day was unusually bright and promising: the noon became overcast; and in the evening of his life, his sun set enveloped with clouds, and shrouded by the most gloomy obscurity. It requires more than

a common measure of grace to support uninjured the flatteries of prosperity: Solomon was inebriated with them, and fell from his exalted piety into folly, guilt, and consequent danger. Who does not weep to see the king of Israel, whose youthful wisdom drew a princess from her country to try the justice of his celebrity, bowing his hoary head to the dust before a dumb idol, and ascribing to the work of men's hands the glory and the worship due only to God? Son of the morning, how art thou fallen! The wisdom which distilled from his lips, which "spake of trees from the cedar tree that is Lebanon, even to the hyssop which springeth out of the wall," and the penetration of which, pierced through the secrets of nature—O where did it slumber, when he forsook the Lord God of his father David, and "went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians, and Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites?" How worthless is "the wisdom of the wise," when left to itself! and how easily does the power of temptation subdue the energies of the heart, and enslave the man, when the assisting hand of Heaven is withdrawn! The last days of Solomon formed a sad contrast to the lustre of his younger life. Blasted by vice, the fruits of the autumn but ill answered the promise of the spring. From the moment of his attachment to idolatry, he passed over to deserved oblivion; and having reigned in Israel forty years, "he slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David."

Rehoboam his son succeeded him, and in his days the kingdom was divided. Ten of the tribes of Israel followed Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and two only, Judah and Benjamin, adhered to the house of David. This division had been foretold, in the days of Solo-

mon, by Ahijah the Shilonite. From this period these kingdoms were totally distinct; and under the titles of Israel and Judah, they had a separate line of kings, and were even sometimes found at war with each other. It is not our design to enter into the history of the kingdoms thus separated: but we refer you to the books of the Kings, and of the Chronicles; which even in the estimation of skepticism, ought surely to have an equal degree of credit, with the regular and authenticated records of any other country. The descendants of Abraham thus divided, were punished by bondage for their transgressions, at two different periods, under different circumstances, in different places, with different consequences. The object of the present meeting is, to exhibit and to corroborate, **THE CAPTIVITIES OF ISRAEL AND OF JUDAH.**

#### I. THE CAPTIVITY OF ISRAEL.

The bondage of the ten tribes took place in the ninth year of the reign of Hosea, king of Israel, in the year of world 3585, and seven hundred and twenty-one years before Christ. According to Josephus they were removed out of their country "nine hundred and forty-seven years after their forefathers were brought out of the land of Egypt; eight hundred years after Joshua had been their leader; and two hundred and forty years, seven months, and seven days, after they had revolted from Rehoboam."\* It was begun in the days of Pekah, king of Israel, and completed by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria. Shalmaneser took Samaria after a siege of three years. Hezekiah was at that time in the seventh year of his reign over Judah. Hosea was taken alive; the government of the Israel-

\*Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib. ix. cap. 14.

ites was completely overthrown; the people were transported into Assyria, Media, and Persia; and other nations, out of Cuthath, Ava, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, were brought into Samaria, and took possession of the country which had belonged to Israel. These are the Samaritans, against whom the Jews bore particular hatred, and who did not fail to return it: for when the Jews were in prosperity they were willing to be thought in some way allied to them, but in their adversity always disowned them. And thus they availed themselves of the favor which Alexander shewed the Jews when he visited them, and professed to descend from Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph.\* But so rooted and so permanent was their mutual enmity, that this opposition raged most furiously in the days of our Lord: so that the woman was surprised that he “being a Jew should ask water of her, who was a woman of Samaria;” and it is added, “for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans;” and we find one of their villages on another occasion, refusing to receive the Savior, “because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.”

The ostensible cause of this captivity was as follows: Hoshea, on an invasion of Samaria by Shalmaneser, in an early part of his reign, had bought him off by presents, and declared himself to be the servant of the the king of Assyria. On these humiliating terms Shalmaneser withdrew his armies from him, and Hoshea was permitted to hold the crown of Israel in subordination to him. After this compact between them, Hoshea secretly conspired against him; and sending to So, king of Egypt, for assistance, withheld the annual tribute to Assyria, designing to shake off the yoke.

\* See Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib. xi, cap. 3.

which Shalmaneser had imposed. This monarch, termed So, in the words read at the commencement of this Lecture, is called Setho by Herodotus; and is the famous Sabachon of Diodorus Siculus, and of other profane writers, who dethroned and murdered Boccharis, the king of Egypt, in the beginning of the reign of Hezekiah, and seized upon the kingdom. Shalmaneser coming to the knowledge of this conspiracy, advanced with a powerful army against Hoshea, shut him up in Samaria, and afterwards took him, and the Israelites, captive.

Of the existence, and the enterprising disposition of Shalmaneser, we have the evidence of Menander the historian, when he wrote his chronology, and translated the Tyrian Chronicles into the Greek language. This is his testimony, preserved by Josephus—"Eluleus reigned thirty-six years. This monarch, upon the revolt of the Citteans, sailed against, and reduced them. Against these did the king of Assyria (Shalmaneser) send an army, and invaded all Phenicia. At length he made peace with them and returned. But Sidon, Ace, Palatyrus, and several other cities, revolted from the Tyrians, and surrendered themselves to the king of Assyria. Now when the Tyrians refused to submit to him, he renewed the contest; and the Phenicians furnished him with sixty ships and eight hundred rowers. The Tyrians opposed him with twelve ships, dispersed his armament, and took five hundred men prisoners. He renewed the struggle, however, and placed a garrison over their rivers and aqueducts, to prevent them from drawing water; during which period the Tyrians sustained the siege, and drank the waters of the wells which they digged upon this emer-

gency.”\* This testimony is produced to shew that profane historians confirm the character which the scriptures give of Shalmaneser; and it decidedly proves that he was formidable to all his neighbors.

Who can read these narrations of blood shed without deploring the evil of falling into the hands of an unprincipled tyrant? The designs of God against Israel did not clear Shalmaneser from guilt. He was an instrument to bring about the purposes of Deity without his concurrence, and even without his knowledge. He meant only to satiate his ambition at the expense of the fortunes, the liberties, and the lives of his contemporaries; and his treatment of other nations, unconnected with the Israelites, demonstrates too clearly the tyranny of his disposition. The history of man furnishes us with many a lamentable evidence, that he is not to be trusted with absolute power, that he grows intoxicated with it, and that possessing it, he plunges either himself or others into an abyss of ruin and misery. In proportion as he is furnished with the means to effect much, he does mischief; as those beasts of the forest are most to be dreaded, which have the most strength united with their sanguinary dispositions. Where much power is possessed, much good might be done. How many thousands of hearts might one man make happy! He might suppress the vicious, and strengthen the weak, and comfort the sorrowful: he might be as God, dispensing peace, and joy, and order, around him in society. But, alas! he no sooner feels his exaltation than he grows giddy with it! He no longer recollects that he is himself a man, in the midst of those who are “bone of his bone and flesh

\*Menand, apud. Joseph. Antiq. lib. ix, chap. 14.

of his flesh." Half the world must worship him: and the other half, who will not, must be visited with "a rod of iron." He values not the soul of his brother: he cares not how many lives he expends to gratify his ambition, his hatred, or his passions. Society groans under his tyranny, and the world is turned into a field of blood. See yonder unjust man, whose character will be read in his history before we close this Lecture, setting up an image of gold, and commanding on pain of death a whole empire to worship it: What gave birth to this extravagance? The intoxication of power! And are his threats merely the language of caprice and anger? No! but yonder are three men dragged to the fire to be burned, because they refuse to comply with a command, from which their religion, their conscience, and every thing which they ought to hold most dear, revolt. That man might be a sun to quicken, to warm, and to illumine: but he is a meteor that scorches, terrifies, and blights, whatever, falls under his baneful influence.

How different is the character of the Deity! When I appear before a great man, his object often is to dazzle and to overwhelm me. He is anxious only that I should feel his greatness and my own inferiority. He clothes himself with all his power, and enjoys my embarrassment. No matter whether millions of people are made unhappy by his pride: he is careless whether he is loved, so that he is but feared. I turn away with horror and disgust from a man whose breath is in his nostrils, living but to confound and to torment, to HIM in whom all majesty and might centre—and there I lose my apprehensions! He, who rules above all, in the plenitude of power, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, blends with infinite

strength, illimitable compassion. The spirit that shrinks with dismay from the frowning, forbidding aspect, of an imperious fellow-worm, is invited to the feet of his Creator, not more by the mild and affectionate language of scripture, than by the experience which he has had of his gracious character, in the mercies which he has personally received at his hand. His majesty astonishes, but does not confound. His glory dazzles, but does not consume. His power fills the mind with awe, but does not overwhelm it with terror. Ah, David was right, when, in his great strait, he preferred falling into the hands of God, rather than into the hands of man; and the history of this night proves his wisdom. Yet did the Israelites choose a man before God, and elevated a creature to the throne previously filled only by the Creator!

The most remarkable circumstance attending the captivity of Israel, is THE LOSS OF THE TEN TRIBES. We hear nothing more concerning them, excepting a few who returned with Judah and Benjamin from the Babylonish captivity; and the general opinion respecting them is, that they were absorbed in the nations among whom they were dispersed. Of this opinion are Josephus and St. Jerome. Others object that their return from captivity appears to be plainly pointed out by Amos, and by Hosea. "I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall be no more pulled up out of the land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God."\* Hosea

\* Amos ix, 14, 15.

also says, "Then shall the children of Judah, and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land; for great shall be the day of Jezreel."\* The first of these prophecies relates to the rearing of the tabernacle "of David," which surely was done by Judah and Benjamin, and appears more decidedly to refer to them, since the ten tribes had disavowed any connexion with the house of David at the time of their separation. Upon the answer returned by Rehoboam, they replied to the king, "what portion have we in David? Neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse! To your tents, O Israel! Now see to thine own house, David!"† In the second, I confess, Judah and Israel are mentioned separately, yet conjointly, because of the co-operation ascribed to them. May we not suppose this prediction fulfilled in the return of the Levites, the remnant of Israel, who were brought from Babylon with the men of Judah and of Benjamin? Who united with them under one leader, and who assisted them in building the wall of Jerusalem? We leave the question to the decision of your own judgments. Indeed it does not immediately come before us as a subject of discussion; our professed object being simply to confirm the fact of the two captivities, and to relate the circumstances attending them. There is no record of their return, there are no traces of their tribes, there is no evidence of their existence. Those who maintain that they are yet in being, advance only an hypothesis incapable of demonstration; and the most general conclusion upon the subject is, we believe, that they are wholly lost.

\* Hosea i, 11.

† 1 Kings xii, 16.

The inferences which we deduce from this position are these:

1. That the coming of the Messiah was the grand object of the Old Testament dispensation, and that the peculiarities of the Jews bore a manifest relation to him. To decide this, it is only necessary to observe, that from the time of the promise made to Adam, the Savior was the subject of all the engagements between God and man. The study of genealogies, and the strictness with which they were commanded to be kept, were enjoined, we may presume, that they might trace with certainty and decision, the line of the Messiah. The ceremonies of the Jewish religion were evidently types of something: as they were expressly instituted by God, it must follow that the antitype should be sublime, that these rites might be worthy their great Founder: and no meaning can be affixed to them, unless they be allowed to refer to the life, the sufferings, and the atonement of the Lord Jesus. The prophecies at that early period, looked forwards to the Savior: and they increased in clearness and in copiousness, as they approached the advent of the Messiah. The separation of the Jews from all other nations, was founded, we conceive, upon this same principle. Hence we infer

2. That the very existence of the Jews depended upon their connexion with the Savior. Till the days of David the promises respecting the Messiah were of general import, that he should descend from Abraham. But then they became more explicit, and it was declared that Christ should be of the house of David. To the family of David, therefore, the promise was restricted. So long as they adhered to, and were connected with, the house of David, which was also

the house of Jesus, they were separated with their brethren from the rest of mankind, and their existence was secured: but when they voluntarily resigned their interest in that house, and were severed from the two tribes, they were dispersed and absorbed among the nations, and the few who returned from captivity lost their distinction: they returned with Judah and Benjamin, and were swallowed up of their brethren. Now it is remarkable that individuals were supported in the same way. Lot, so long as he stands in union with Abraham, who was inseparably connected with the Messiah, is an object of importance: but once divided from him, we read little of him afterwards, and at length he totally vanishes out of our sight. Judah and Benjamin, who were of the house of David, were also led into captivity: but they were restored, *because* of their connexion with the Messiah: while Israel, having become separated from this great interest, were scattered and lost. These observations will not, we trust, be deemed altogether unimportant; as they prove the unity of the scriptures, and the connexion between the Old and the New Testaments. But we hasten to fix your attention upon

## II. THE CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH.

This captivity was commenced by Nebuchadnezzar, and completed by his general, Nebuzaradan. The interval between the first desolation of Jerusalem by the king of Babylon, and its total overthrow by his servant, was about twenty-two years. It was begun in the reign of Jehoiakim, six hundred and six years before the coming of Christ. Nebuchadnezzar took the city in the ninth month, called Casleu, which answers to our November, and on the twelfth day of

the month: which the Jews keep as an annual fast in commemoration of this event to this day.\* Among the number of captives taken from Jerusalem, were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishaël, and Azariah: whom the Babylonians called, Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The interval between the commencement, and the consummation, of the destruction of Jerusalem, is crowded with important transactions, a few of which it may be necessary to mention.

The reading of the roll before Jehoiakim, who was not rendered sensible of his wickedness by the first desolation of his country, excited the most infuriate emotions, and having first cut it in pieces with his own hand, he threw it into the fire. The Jews keep also the twenty-ninth day of Casleu a fast, in remembrance of the impiety of the monarch, by whom this important writing was consumed.

In the seventh year of Jehoiakim, and the second after the death of the father of Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel explained the first vision of the king of Babylon, which elevated him to the highest dignities of the empire.

The other events recorded in the book of Daniel, to the expulsion of Nebuchadnezzar from society, followed in the order in which they are there narrated, and conduct us to the total overthrow of Jerusalem by Nebuzaradan, in the reign of Zedekiah: which was accompanied with the most horrible circumstances of rigor and cruelty. The temple was spoiled of all its riches and furniture, and was burned, together with the royal palace. The slaughter was dreadful: the city was totally dismantled: and the whole of its

\* See Prideaux's *Connec.* vol. i, b. 1. *Anc. Univ. Hist.* vol. iv, b. 1, c. 7. note O. Usher sub. A. M. 3397.

inhabitants, who escaped the sword, were led into captivity. This event took place in the year of the world 3718, five hundred and eighty-eight years before Christ, and one hundred and thirty-four years after the destruction of the kingdom of Israel, and the captivity of the ten tribes.

Nebuchadnezzar having at length sheathed the sword, applied himself to the completion of his works at Babylon. As it will be necessary to relate the siege of this city by Cyrus, which terminated the captivity of Judah, it will be proper previously to give a short description of this wonderful place. The city stood upon an immense plain, and formed a complete square. The most remarkable works in, and about it, were the walls, the temple, the palace, the bridge, and the banks of the river, and the canals for draining it.

1. **THE WALLS.** They were in thickness eighty-seven feet: in height three hundred and fifty: in compass four hundred and eighty furlongs, or about sixty miles. This is the account given by Herodotus, the most ancient writer upon this subject, who was himself at Babylon. Each side of the city was defended by a wall fifteen miles in length. These walls were built of bricks, cemented with bitumen, a glutinous slime, resembling pitch, found in abundance in that country, which binds together much more firmly than lime, and in time becomes harder than the bricks or stones themselves. They were surrounded by a vast moat filled with water. On every side of this immense square were twenty-five gates, amounting in all to one hundred, and as many bridges were thrown across the moat which encircled the city. These gates were all made of solid brass: and for this reason, when God promised to Cyrus the conquest of Baby-

lon, he said, that he would "break before him, *the gates of brass.*" At proper intervals towers were erected all along the walls, each of them about ten feet higher than the walls themselves. It seems, however, that this is to be understood only of those parts of the walls where towers were needful for defence: when three towers were between every two of the gates, and four at the four corners: but some parts of the walls being upon a morass and inaccessible to an enemy, were not thus defended: and the whole number of the towers were two hundred and fifty. This economy destroying the symmetry of the city, the deficiency was afterwards supplied by Nitocris.\* From the twenty-five gates on each side of the city were twenty-five streets extending in a straight line to the corresponding gates on the opposite side, directly intersecting each other at right angles: so that there were fifty streets, each of them fifteen miles long, dividing the whole city into six hundred and seventy-six squares, each square two miles and a quarter in circumference. The ground enclosed within these squares, was formed into gardens.

The next objects worthy attention were,

2. THE BRIDGE, AND THE BANKS OF THE RIVER. A branch of the Euphrates ran through the centre of the city from north to south. On each side of the river were a quay, and an high wall built of brick and of bitumen, of the same thickness with the walls which surrounded the city. In these walls, over against every street that led to the river, were also gates of brass, and from them were descents by steps to the river. These brazen gates were always open in

\*Anc. Un'v. Hist. vol. iv, b. 1, c. 9, p. 498 and 434. Dublin edition 1745, 20 vol.

the day, and shut by night. The bridge thrown over it in the middle of the city, was a magnificent structure, a furlong in length, and thirty feet in breadth. Nor must we omit

3. THE CANALS for draining the river. In the beginning of the summer, the sun melting the snows on the mountains of Armenia, a vast overflow of the Euphrates takes place in the months of June, July, and August. To prevent any damage to the city and its inhabitants, at a considerable distance above the town, were cut two artificial canals, which turned the course of the waters into the Tigris before they reached Babylon. For additional security, two immense banks were raised on each side of the river. In order to form these mounds it was necessary to drain off the water; which was done by digging a prodigious lake forty miles square, one hundred and sixty in circumference, and thirty-five feet deep.

These are the wonders recorded by ancient writers, concerning Babylon; and which almost exceed credibility, were it not that their testimony on this subject perfectly coincides with itself. Berosus, Magasthenes, and Abydenus, agree in ascribing these works to Nebuchadnezzar.\*

4. THE PALACE, THE HANGING GARDENS, AND THE TEMPLE, were respectively splendid and magnificent: but as they are not necessary to our subject, we waive a description of them. It is agreed by most historians, that the temple of Belus was built on the plan of the tower of Babel, and is by some supposed to be erected on its ruins. Josephus says, that Babylon took its name

\* For this, and a more enlarged account of Babylon, see Rollin's *Anc. Hist.* vol. i, p. 133, &c. *Anc. Univ. Hist.* vol. iv, b. 1, c. 9. Prideaux's *Connec.* vol. i, pt. i, b. ii, p. 133—148. Herod. l. 1, c. 178, &c.

from Babel, a word implying confusion, in commemoration of the confusion of language, and the dispersion of the people \* This temple was higher than the highest pyramid of Egypt.† From the situation of Babylon, in a clear atmosphere, and a serene sky, together with the advantage of this immense elevation, arose the superiority of Chaldeans in astronomical studies. The description of this immense city, which has now been submitted to you, was necessary that you may understand the nature of those operations adopted by Cyrus in obtaining possession of it.

We are not to wonder that the heart of Nebuchadnezzar, the resistless conqueror, and the lord of Babylon, was inflated with pride. Where there is not a principle of religion to counteract the influence of human depravity, the power of a lofty spirit admits of no restraint. But “pride is high unto destruction; and an haughty spirit goeth before a fall.” Nebuchadnezzar ascribed to the power of his own arm, the glory and the majesty of his kingdom, and the Deity punished him, by driving him from human society. He would be a god, and he became less than a man!‡ His humiliation had been predicted in a vision, explained to him by the prophet Daniel, a year before it took place.§ The five following considerations may perhaps tend to confirm this event, as an historical fact.

1. It is circumstantially related in a decree which Nebuchadnezzar issued upon his restoration to his kingdom: which decree must have existed at the very time when the scriptural account was written; admit-

\* Josephus de Antiq. Jud. Tom. I, lib. i, cap. 4. Hudsoni edit.

† For a general description of it, see Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. ii, b. i, c. 9. and vol. i, b. i, c. 2. See also note 3, of this Lecture, at the end of the volume.

‡ Dan. iv, 29---33.

§ Dan. iv, 4, &c.

ting (which we may reasonably claim) that the event was recorded at the time which it asserts, and possesses the antiquity ascribed to the book of Daniel: therefore imposition was impossible, and the attempt among contemporaries, would only have exposed the writer to derision. It is not the relation of a transaction previous to his birth, which Daniel has written, but he was an eye-witness of the circumstance, an actor in the scene, and the whole Jewish nation, as well as the Babylonish empire, were concerned in it.

2. Scaliger, thinks that this madness of Nebuchadnezzar is obscurely hinted in a fragment of Abydenus, preserved by Eusebius\*—wherein having, from the testimony of the Chaldean writers, represented the king to have fallen into an ecstasy, and to have foretold the destruction of that empire by the Medes and Persians, he adds—"immediately after uttering this prophecy, he disappeared," which Scaliger supposes refers to the deposition of his kingly authority, and to his exclusion from society.

3. Herodotus speaks of his pride, and of his defiance even of Divine power, in much the same terms as those used by the inspired writer. He says—"such was his loftiness and presumption, that he boasted, it was not in the power of God himself to dispossess him of his kingdom, so securely did he deem himself established in it."†

4. Josephus asserts this event: and amid all his numerous opposers, and their diversified objections, the relation of this fact by him was never disputed."‡

5. By Ptolemy's canon, a contemporary record, Nebuchadnezzar is said to have reigned forty-three

\* Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix, cap. 41. † Herod. lib. 2.

‡ Joseph. de Antiq. Judeor. Tom. I, lib. x, cap. 10.

years, eight of which are passed over in silence. His actions, as recounted both by sacred and profane historians, are so remarkable, and his spirit so enterprising, that it can scarcely be imagined that he should be inactive during eight years, or that his achievements in that period should be buried in oblivion. The conclusion is in favor of the record of Daniel, that he was excluded from society, for seven years, till he learned to acknowledge the hand which had made him great, and to ascribe all power to God.\* Of the reign and the works of Nebuchadnezzar, Josephus has preserved the testimonies of Berosus, Megasthenes, Diocles, and Philostratus.

BEROSUS, in the third book of his Chaldaic histories says—that “his father died at Babylon after having reigned twenty-one years: that Nebuchadnezzar was at that time absent in Egypt, but having received the intelligence of his father’s death, he arranged his affairs abroad, and committing the care and transportation of the *Jews*, Syrians, Egyptians, and Phenicians, to his friends, to follow him with his army and carriages to Babylon, he himself with a few men hastened thither, and took upon himself the government of the empire.” Again he adds, “with the spoils of war, he most magnificently decorated the temple of Belus—he enlarged the old city—built within it a triple wall—erected a magnificent palace”—and so he goes on to speak of the hanging gardens, and of his other operations. “MEGASTHENES, in the fourth book of his Indian history, mentions this garden, and asserts that Nebuchadnezzar surpassed Hercules in valor, and in the greatness of his exploits.” DIOCLES in the second book of

\* See Prideaux’s *Connec.* vol. i, b. 1, in locum.

the Persian history, and PHILOSTRATUS, in his history of India and Phenicia, say that he besieged Tyre thirteen years, and took it in the reign of Ithobal.”\*

To Nebuchadnezzar succeeded Evil-Merodach, who set Jechoniah at liberty and made him one of his friends. After a reign of vice and folly of two years, he was slain by the conspiracy of his own family.

To him succeeded Neriglasser, who reigned only four years, and was slain in a battle against Cyrus.

To him succeeded Belshazzar, with whose life the Babylonish captivity terminated. Cyrus, conducted by an invisible hand, advanced gradually towards Babylon, and closely besieged it: while Belshazzar, or rather Nitocris the queen mother (for the character of Belshazzar by all profane historians is, that he was wholly addicted to sensual pleasures, which is abundantly confirmed by the scriptural account) as strenuously fortified, and defended it. This conquerer surrounded the city with his army: but the king of Babylon presuming upon its impregnable strength, and upon the magazine of provisions, which, without any fresh supplies, less than a ten years siege could not exhaust, derided the efforts of his powerful adversary. In the mean time the besiegers encompassed the city with a deep trench, keeping their purposes a profound secret; and Cyrus was informed of the feast which was about to be held in Babylon. Upon this night he determined to suspend the fates of his army, and of the empire for which he fought. On this occasion of festivity, Belshazzar, with a bold impiety at which his predecessors, proud and daring as they were, would have shuddered, profaned the vessels of the temple of Jehovah. The appari-

\* Joseph. de Antiq. Jud. Tom. i, lib. x, cap. 11. Hudsoni edit.

tion of an hand writing on the wall of the palace in unknown characters first excited the apprehensions of the king. In vain he called the astrologers and the magicians: in vain he alternately threatened and entreated them: they could neither read the writing, nor make known the interpretation. The sentence was written in Samaritan characters which the Chaldeans did not understand; and could they have decyphered these, they could not have explained them. The words literally rendered are, "He hath numbered, he hath numbered, he hath weighed, and they divide." Daniel was sent for, and announced from them the immediate fall of his empire. While this was the state of things at the palace, Cyrus had drained the river into his moat, till it was fordable. Informed of the confusion which reigned in the city, he issued orders to his troops to enter it that very night at north and south, by marching up the channel. They were commanded by two eminent officers, and advanced towards each other, without suffering any impediment, till they met in the centre of the river. God, who had promised to open before him the gates of brass, preceded them: otherwise this singular and adventurous expedition must have failed. Had the gates which closed the avenues leading to the river been shut, which was always the custom at night, the whole scheme had been defeated. But so was it ordered by Providence, that on this night of general riot and confusion, with unparalleled negligence, *they were left open!* So that these troops penetrated the very heart of the city without opposition, and reached the palace before any alarm was given. The guards were immediately put to the sword—Belshazzar slain—and the city taken almost without resistance.

Thus fell the Babylonish empire. Cyrus made a decree in favor of the Jews, which led to their restoration; and thus terminated the captivity of Judah, after a period of seventy years.\* They returned to their country, and rebuilt their city and their temple: and while the young men shouted when the foundation was laid, the elders wept aloud because of its manifest inferiority to the magnificence of the former building: "So that they could not discern the noise of the shout of joy, from the noise of the weeping of the people!"

The history which has passed before you this night, discovers with what facility the Deity can dry up the streams of our enjoyment, and even cut off the supplies of our existence. He has only to speak the word, and a thousand instruments spring up to execute the fierceness of his displeasure. He has only to give the command, and the air which we breathe, becomes the vehicle of instantaneous death. Fire mingles with the blast of the desert, and consumes the vitals.† The pestilence "walketh in darkness," or flying through the slumbering city, shakes poison from its deadly pinions. He holds back the face of his sun, and the "heavens are black with wind and rain," a partial deluge covers the country, and the promise of the harvest is cut off. Or he commands his winds to scatter the clouds, to drive them to some more favored land, and the corn, expecting in vain the early and the latter rain, withers and perishes. The earth is cleft with the heat, the herd die through lack of water, the sunbeam beats upon the man's head, till he faints, and his tongue cleaves to the roof of his mouth, and he is brought down "to the dust of death." The desolation some-

\* See note 5, of this Lecture, at the end of the volume.

† See note 6, of this Lecture, at the end of the volume.

times suddenly arises. There is peace in the city: the harvest is swelling to maturity: every heart rejoices in the security of its comforts. A cloud rises in the east, and extends till it hides the sun at noon-day. A noise is heard in the air, which covers "every face with blackness." An army of locusts descends: and the land which was "as the garden of Eden before them, behind them is a desolate wilderness." Sometimes the same desolation is effected at a stroke by the earthquake: at others, war thunders in the heart of an empire, and blood runs down the streets of a city.\*

The conduct of Nebuchadnezzar is fruitful also in instruction. We frequently see the worst of characters filling the most eminent situations, moving in the most exalted and the most splendid spheres, ruling over powerful empires, exalting his throne above the stars of heaven: a luminary that dazzles the eyes of the princes of this world: a meteor that perplexes, confounds, and terrifies the inhabitants of the earth. Nations bow down one after another, to the iron yoke, till the whole world is subjected to him. Elevation of rank in society, is so far from being bestowed upon the most worthy, and the most upright characters, that these situations, so full of danger, and which require so much wisdom, are frequently seized by violence, obtained by birth, procured by partial favor, and are often permitted by Providence to be occupied by men, at once destitute of principle, and of religion the true source of principle. When we consider to whose hands the government of mighty empires has been committed: when we examine the history of the great monarch of Babylon: when we trace the sceptre of

\* See note 7, of this Lecture, at the end of the volume.

power, alternately under the control of Greece and of Rome, and read the lives of monsters, whose delight it was to trample upon every social feeling, and to violate the rights of humanity, (to exclude modern history from our calcution) it must be confessed, and it is recorded in human blood, that in many instances "the earth" has been "given into the hand of the wicked."

But the power of the wicked is limited. 'Heaven is above all yet.' He who permits, can and does restrain the exertion of their power. To every thing there is a limit. The ocean has it boundaries over which it cannot pass. The winds are not suffered to rage with fury uncontrolled. The planets, and even eccentric comets, have their prescribed orbits. The meteor has the point of its elevation, and the moment of its fall, and of its expiration, assigned it. And he who gave, can recall the power of the oppressor; and dreadful will be his responsibility for the abuse of it!

When war is awakened, the judgments of God are abroad in the earth. Thus have we seen to night a people distinguished for their religious privileges, for their prosperity, and for their separation from all other nations, devoted to destruction because of their transgressions. Let us learn, that whenever the sword is permitted to devour, it is to chastise the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity. War is horrible in its nature, and in its effects. It separates the dearest and the closest connexions of human nature. One battle renders thousands of wives, widows: thousands of children, fatherless: thousands of parents, childless, thousands of spirits ruined beyond redemption! See, pressing into yonder slippery, empurpled field, throngs of all ages, seeking their own among the dead! In

this disfigured countenance the child discerns with difficulty the features of his father. In that mangled body dwelt the spirit which was the prop and the glory of yonder silvery head, now bowed down over it in silent, unspeakable sorrow. There the widow washes the wounds of her husband with her tears. And how few of that dreadful list of slaughtered men were fit to die! Surely war was let loose upon the world as a curse, in the just anger of God.

Let us seek therefore a better state of existence, Let us deem it no longer an hardship, that we are "pilgrims and strangers upon the earth:" but let us "confess it" with cheerfulness, and look for "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Let us turn away from the kingdoms of this world, laid open to the hand of violence, and seek a shelter under the government of Deity, from all present, and from all future evil. Let us press forwards to his immediate presence, to live there in a state of rest, a state of holiness, a state of felicity, a state of permanency, a state of immutability!

## LECTURE XII.

THE LIFE, DEATH, RESURRECTION, AND ASCENSION OF JESUS CHRIST, PROVED AS MATTERS OF FACT.

LUKE II. 1—7.

*And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling-clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.*

1 COR. XV. 3—8.

*For I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures: and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve. After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once: of whom the greater part*

*remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.*

2 PETER i, 16.

*For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty.*

THERE is a certain degree of sublimity in which we feel gratified, and the emotions which it excites are pleasing as well as awful: but beyond that—the sensation becomes painful and oppressive. As my eye explores the azure vault of heaven, I contemplate with solemn delight worlds moving there, suspended without any known or visible support: yet I should tremble if a rock of ice, which would be but as a grain of sand in comparison of these, hung over my head. The reason why I feel no terror in beholding bodies so immense quivering upon nothing is, that they are too remote to excite apprehension, and distance has so diminished them, that I lose the conception of their magnitude. I gaze with pleasure upon the proud elevation of the lofty mountain, as I stand at its foot: but I shudder to approach the brink of a precipice of equal depth: the one excites in me an impression of the sublime—the other appears to risk my personal safety. So nearly allied are the emotions of sublimity and terror, that the one sometimes rises into the other! An earthly monarch does well to borrow all possible splendor, and to array himself in all the ensigns of royalty, in order to impress the spectator with an idea of

majesty: and scarcely are we impressed after all! We see humanity tottering under that weighty grandeur, and feel that we are in the presence of *but* a man. The Majesty of heaven needs no such appendages. Decked in his mildest radiance, no mortal vision could endure the insufferable splendor; and we have seen him, when all ideas of sublimity were absorbed and lost in the stronger emotions of terror. We can only behold him at a distance without fear: whenever he approaches us, whatever veil he may spread over his uncreated glory, we are overwhelmed with the presence of Deity.

We cannot contemplate God in any point of view, through the medium of revelation, without being sensible of his perfections. If his mercy speak in whispers, soft as the breath of the morning, or grateful as the gale fanned by the wings of the evening, every passion sinks to rest, every tumultuous feeling subsides, and we are lost in wonder, in love, in ecstasy. If his justice thunder in the heavens, the commotions of listening nations are suspended: and men, and angels acknowledge, in silent awe, the justice of his dispensations. In making requisition for sin, and requiring its expiation by blood, his conduct may be inexplicable to our present imperfect apprehensions; nevertheless we are assured, that "it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering." O how unlike is He to the most perfect of human characters! The wisdom of Solomon yielded to the strength of seduction: the piety of David, to the force of temptation: the integrity of Abraham, to the impressions of terror: and there never appeared on the face of the earth a

perfect character, till "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." But Deity is always equal to himself—and appears alike great in terror and in mildness, in mercy and in judgment, in pardoning and in punishing.

We have lately seen him in the thunder and the lightning of Sinai: we are now to contemplate him in the stillness and the tranquillity of Calvary. In this latter form he is more endeared to us, as sinners saved by grace: but he is equally great in both. The righteous law, which was pronounced with an audible voice, out of "the thick darkness where God was," is a beautiful transcript of the purity of his nature: and the melancholy scenes of Calvary present a fine illustration of the harmony of his perfections. The first dispensation was temporary: the types, which were the shadows only of good things to come, have disappeared: the ceremonial law waxed old; and its institutions, having received their accomplishment, vanished. A new and immutable dispensation, more simple, more spiritual, more enlarged in its nature, followed: we still repose under its shadow; and it looks forwards to eternity for its fulness, its glory and its completion.

In reviewing years which are passed by, we are necessarily involved in difficulties. The destroying hand of time obliterates many a page of history: and the more remote the age to which our attention is directed, the more oppressively heavy hangs the cloud of oblivion over it. We have surmounted the larger portion of these difficulties; and as we return to later generations, the cloud slowly rolls away. We have gradually advanced from obscurity to the dawn of the morning—we have seen the gates of light open upon

us—and darkness has reluctantly yielded, to the rising radiance of that day, which is now hastening to its meridian.

The subject of the present Lecture is, **THE LIFE, DEATH, RESURRECTION, AND ASCENSION OF JESUS CHRIST, PROVED AS MATTERS OF FACT.**

We are not now to relate facts which took place at the infancy of time, in some remote empire, long since dismembered, and its very name consigned over to oblivion: but the events which we defend transpired under the immediate sway of imperial Rome, at the zenith of her power, and when her dominions comprehended half the globe. Her standard had been planted in remotest Asia: her emperors bestowed or displaced the diadems of neighboring states at their pleasure: her eagles had stretched their wings over the sea, and alighted upon the fields of Britain, then esteemed and denominated “the ends of the earth;” and while polished nations endured her yoke, the savage barbarian trembled at her name in the inaccessible wilds of his native forest, and the sons of the north fled to their cloud-encompassed mountains, and crouched concealed amid the mists which crept along their summits.

It is singular that, at this period, the whole world were in expectation of some grand and impending event. Not only were the descendants of Abraham looking for the “Desire of all nations,” but a general tradition was in circulation, and a general impression prevailed, that some extraordinary personage was about to make his appearance. This is not hinted obscurely, but the expectation is stated openly and fairly, by many of the most considerable writers of

that age, both poets and historians. Seutonius,\* and Tacitus,† had stated a common opinion that “the East should prevail.” To this extraordinary expectation, awakened and kept alive, we may reasonably impute the journey of the Magi, whose curiosity had been excited by the appearance of an unknown star, differing in motion, and in all other respects, from the orbs which ordinarily revolve in the heavens. Of this, however, we shall feel it our duty to speak more at large hereafter. As a confirmation of our assertion, respecting the sentiments entertained at that singular period, we cannot resist the inclination which we feel, to translate a part of the most celebrated eclogue of Virgil, which he calls Pollio—beyond comparison the most elegant, and deservedly the most admired production of all antiquity. It was written about forty years before the birth of our Savior. It was composed probably to compliment Marcellus, the nephew of Augustus by Octavia; but we trust that you will perceive parts in it, which can be strictly applicable to no mortal reign, however glorious: you will deem it probable that he has borrowed his most sublime images from the prophecies, with which he might be acquainted through the medium of the Greek translation; and the whole is a specimen of the general expectation of the world, just previous to the advent of our Lord.

“Sicilian Muses, let us attempt more exalted strains! The last era foretold in Cumæan verse is already arrived. The grand series of revolving ages commences anew. Now a new progeny is sent down from lofty heaven. Be propitious, chaste Lucina, to the infant

\* Suetonius in Vespasiano, cap. 4. † Tacitus, Histor, lib. v. cap. 18.

boy—by him the iron years shall close, and the golden age shall arise upon all the world. Under thy consular sway, Pollio, shall this glory of the age make his entrance, and the great months begin their revolutions. Should any vestiges of guilt remain, swept away under thy direction, the earth shall be released from fear for ever; and with his Father's virtues shall he rule the tranquil world. The earth shall pour before thee, sweet boy, without culture, her smiling first fruits. The timid herds shall not be afraid of the large, fierce lions. The venomous asp shall expire, and the deadly, poisonous plant, shall wither. The fields shall become yellow with golden ears of corn: the blushing grape shall hang upon the wild bramble; and the stubborn oak shall distil soft, dewy honey.—Yet still shall some vestiges of pristine vice remain: which shall cause the sea to be ploughed with ships—towns to be besieged—and the face of the earth to be wounded with furrows. New wars shall arise—new heroes be sent to the battle——But when thy *maturity* is come, every land shall produce all necessary things, and commerce shall cease. The ground shall not endure the harrow, nor shall the vine need the pruning-hook. As they wove their thread, the Destinies sang this strain—‘Roll on, ye years of felicity!’—Bright offspring of the gods! thou great increase of Jove! advance to thy distinguished honors! for now the time approaches! Behold, the vast globe, with its ponderous convexity, bows to thee!—the lands—the expansive seas—the sublime heavens! See, how all things rejoice in this advancing era! Oh! that the closing scenes of a long life may yet hold out, and so much fire remain, as shall enable me to celebrate thy deeds!’”\*

So sublimely sang the Roman bard: but Isaiah struck a deeper chord, and in strains still more elevated announced the coming Savior. "Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice-den. They shall not hurt, nor destroy, in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."\* "For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing; and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree."†

Nor was the state of the world at that period less singular, than were the expectations of the different nations. The bloody portal of war was closed: the gates of the temple of Janus, always open in a time of contest, were shut: the commotions of all empires had subsided; and the whole earth enjoyed a profound tranquillity, propitious to the Savior's mild and peaceful sway, and characteristic of it. This was the fifth time that these gates had been closed from the foundation of the city of Rome; and the peace, which was universal, continued without interruption for *twelve* years.

\* Isaiah xi, 5—9.

† Isaiah lv, 12, 13.

Augustus, at this time, had issued a decree, that all persons under the Roman dominion should be registered, according to their respective provinces, cities, and families. Joseph and Mary, on this occasion, were called to the city of David, from their obscure village, to which, as being of his lineage, they originally belonged, that they might be registered among those who were of the same family. And thus the mighty monarch of the Roman empire, was induced by an invisible power, whom he knew not, whom he served not, to enact a novel and general decree, to bring from their obscurity a poor, unknown family; that He who came too humbly to be acknowledged, might not lose an iota of evidence to his character and to his mission; and that the prophecies should be fulfilled, which had asserted that "the Ruler of Israel" should come out of "Bethlehem!"

A variety of conjectures have been formed respecting this tax. Some have asserted,\* others have denied,† an universal enrolment. It is not necessary indeed that any other taxation than that of Judea, should be supposed, which will account for the silence of ancient historians upon the subject.—The original word‡ does not necessarily imply "all the world," but may be rendered "all the land"—referring to the whole of Israel, and comprehending those parts which had been dismembered from the body, and distributed among the descendants of Herod the Great; and Galilee the country of Joseph among them. It may be necessary also to observe, that we are not to take the term "*tax*" in the sense usually affixed to it: a *duty*

\* Prideaux's Connec. Vol. iv. pt. ii, b. ix.

† Lardner—Cred. Vol. ii. c. 1.

‡ ἀπογραφὴν.

levied upon the people: for it simply implies here a *register*, or *enrolment*. It should also be remembered, that Herod, although called king of Judea, was dependent upon the Roman emperor, and tributary to him: consequently, such an enrolment might be made, in virtue of a decree of Augustus, and yet be deemed no infringement upon the rights of these subordinate rulers. Josephus speaks of an oath of allegiance to Herod and to Augustus, which his countrymen took about this time; and it is more than probable, that he means the same thing with that which Luke states under the denomination of a register. The time of this enrolment is stated to be when "Cyrenius was governor of Syria.\*"

Upon this occasion came Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem. The immense conflux of people had filled all the inns, and all the houses of public reception; so that they were compelled to lodge in a stable, where the mother of Jesus was delivered of the Savior of the world! The inns of the East, at this day, are large square buildings, usually only one story high, with a spacious court in the centre of them. Into this court you enter through a wide gate, and on the right and left hand, you perceive rooms that are appointed as lodgings for travellers. Those that come first take the rooms which they prefer: but must provide themselves both with a couch and provision: for the rooms are perfectly naked, and contain no sort of furniture whatever.

"My kingdom is not of this world," said the Savior: and he spake a truth capable of many and decisive evidences. His very entrance into the world announc-

\* In Lardner's Cred. Vol. ii, c. 1. the reader may find an inexhaustible fund of criticism and sound learning, upon this circumstance.

ed it. It would ill have become Him, who was to converse with every possible scene of misery, to have made his appearance amid the shouts of thousands prostrate before him. No palace supported by columns of marble, and perfumed with the incense of Arabia, sheltered his holy head. No vestments of purple interwoven with gold, shaded his tender limbs. No bending attendants received the weeping babe from his mother's arms. No trumpet was blown through the regions of Judea to declare the birth of "the King of the Jews," or to announce the expectations of the heir to the throne of David. The world frowned upon him from the beginning. Poverty was the handmaid who waited upon him at his BIRTH, as scorn followed him through all his days. The Savior and the brute reposed under one common roof, and were driven to the same shed. Even then, when he first opened his eyes upon the light, their meek intelligence seemed to say, "My kingdom is not of this world!"

Yet was he not destitute of honor. Heaven acknowledged the Sovereign whom man rejected. When the First-begotten was brought into the world it was said, "Let all the angels of God worship him." They hastened to announce the "glad tidings" to "shepherds keeping watch over their flocks at night." They sang, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will to men." They became the first preachers of the gospel. On that memorable night, amid their "constellations," they proclaimed the event,

— — — ——"As earth asleep, unconscious lay,  
"And struck their spangled lyres!"

Nor is this relation more remarkable than that which follows, and which is well attested by the authority of

others writers. Strangers from the East, of no mean lineage, and of no mean attainments, came inquiring "Where is he who is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him." A few inquiries are necessary in order to illustrate and to establish this fact.

1. WHO WERE THESE STRANGERS? They are called "wise men," or Magi.\* Some have thought that they were magicians. Indeed in this sense only, it appears, the original word is used in other parts of the scriptures. Simon the sorcerer is so called: so also is Elymas. If they are to be considered in this light, then were the instruments of Satan turned against him: they foreboded the shaking of his empire, and acknowledged the dawn of that day when "he fell as lightning from heaven:" and they are the first fruits of the Savior's victory over the agents of darkness. We are disposed however to accord with our translators, and to affix another interpretation to the term, by considering them as scholars. The Magi of the Persians were priests as well as philosophers: the expounders of their laws, human and divine: nor would they suffer any man to be a king, who was not first enrolled among the Magi. This fact, probably, gave rise to the tradition of the Roman church, that they *were* kings. It is evident that they were Gentiles; and these are the first pledges of the rending of the veil: of the breaking down the wall of partition; and of the abolition of the distinctions which had so long existed between the Jew and the Gentile. They were also "*wise men*:" men not easily deceived. Well acquainted with the face of the heavens, and with the bodies

\* *Magi.*

of light which revolve there, they were not drawn from their native country to Jerusalem, without a conviction that the appearance upon which they gazed was an extraordinary one, and that the light which they followed portended some great event.

2. WHAT WAS THIS STAR? It was not one of those stars which have been from the beginning of the creation, either regular or erratic: otherwise it had not been an indication of any thing new. When they said we have seen *his* star, the most natural construction which we can put upon the words is, that they then beheld it for the first time. It differed in every respect from all the heavenly bodies in the known planetary system. They shine with an equal blaze: this probably had a superior lustre. They are distant, and move remotely through the fields of ether: this was nearer the earth, that it might answer the purpose assigned it. They have a circular motion: this described no orbit. They are permanently fixed: this, having conducted the Magi to the Savior's feet, disappeared for ever. Comets were always held by the ancients as prognostications of extraordinary events, good or bad. They have made emperors tremble on their thrones, and have nerved the arm of soldiers for the battle. But this was a luminous appearance, resembling in shape, figure, and splendor, a heavenly body, so completely, as to justify the appellation of *a star*—yet was it so expressly formed for the purpose of conducting them to the Redeemer, that they called it unequivocally, "*his* star."

3. OF WHAT COUNTRY WERE THEY? I should translate the passage, "We, of the East, have seen his star"—in which case the term, *East*, will not be used to specify the part of the heavens in which the star ap-

peared, but the country from which they came.\* Perhaps from Mesopotamia, the country of Balaam, whose singular prophecy was probably handed down to them by tradition—"There shall come a star out of Jacob:" and there might appear to them a singular coincidence between the prediction, and the phenomenon which they witnessed. Their gifts were Arabian—"gold, frankincense, and myrrh." Their title, Magi, is Persian: and they, of all nations, were likely to be best acquainted with the Messiah, through the prophecies of Daniel. If they came from Arabia Felix, or Sebæa, all of which are east of Jerusalem, and were men of rank, then was the prophecy of David fulfilled, "the kings of Sheba and of Seba shall bring gifts."

4. BY WHAT EVIDENCE IS THIS FACT SUPPORTED? Pliny speaks of "a certain splendid comet, scattering its silver hair, and appearing a god in the midst of men." Chalcidius writes of "the rising of a certain star, not denouncing death and diseases, but the descent of a mild and compassionate God to human converse."†

Thus were the prophecies of the East re-echoed by the western world. The whole globe slumbered in undisturbed tranquillity. The Jews, although tributary to Rome, took their harps from the willows, to sing the approach of Messiah the prince. Samaria had caught the contagion, and was looking for the Christ, who should "teach us all things." The weeks predicted by Daniel were accomplished; and the universal expectation may be conjectured, when impostors availed themselves of the state of the people's mind to

\* See note 2, of this Lecture, at the end of the volume.

† See note 3, of this Lecture, at the end of the volume.

personate the Messiah,\* and when strangers journeyed from the East to Jerusalem in quest of him.

The Magi came to the court of Herod, expecting *there* to have found the babe, who was to be the king of the Jews. Their inquiry alarmed the jealousy of this monarch: and in consequence of it, when he learned that Christ was to be born in Bethlehem, "he sent and slew all the children in Bethlehem, and in the coast thereof, from two years old and under." This, alas, was public enough! The voice of lamentation in Rama, when Rachel wept for her children because they were not, surely was loud; and the history of the Evangelists would have been blasted for ever in the eyes of their contemporaries, had they attempted imposition in so public an event. But Josephus does not record this slaughter. We answer, that Josephus, who wrote about seventy years after this event, drew all his history from the public records; and we may imagine that an act so cruel, and so inglorious to the memory of Herod, would hardly be transmitted to posterity through the medium of a public record. But Josephus *does* record many instances of the cruelty of Herod: is it therefore an objection to Matthew, that he records *one more*? Josephus relates those things which appertained immediately to state affairs: Matthew, those only connected with Jesus Christ. The history is not at all improbable, from the general character of Herod, who was one of the most sanguinary tyrants that ever disgraced humanity. Is it probable, that he who slew Hyrcanus, his wife's grandfather, at the age of eighty, and who on a former occasion had saved *his* life: who publicly executed his lovely and

\* Acts. v, 36, 37.

virtuous partner;\* and who privately slaughtered three of his own children; and all these on principles of jealousy, should, on the same principles, be sparing of the blood of the children of others? In his last illness, a little before he died, he convened all the chief men of Judea, and after having shut them up in the Circus, he called his family together, and said—"I know that the Jews will rejoice at my death. You have these men in your custody. So soon as I am dead, and before it can be known publicly, let in the soldiers upon them, and *kill them!* All Judea, and every family, will then, although unwillingly, mourn at my death!"† "Nay"—adds Josephus,—“with tears in his eyes, he conjured them by their love to him, and by their fidelity to God, not to fail to obey his orders!”—We ask, whether, upon a consideration of this monster's disposition, such a deed as that ascribed to him by Matthew is improbable?—Macrobius, an heathen author, who flourished at the close of the fourth century, asserts it as a fact well known and indisputable.

That our Savior had been in Egypt, is so far from being denied, that it is asserted by Celsus, who affirms that there he learned the arts of magic, to which he imputes his miracles.

The testimony of Josephus to the LIFE of Christ is as follows:

“At this time there was one Jesus, a wise man, if I may call him a man: for he did most wonderful works, and was a teacher of those who received the truth with

\* Mariamne.

† Testimonies of Josephus to the cruel disposition of Herod, manifested especially in his last moments. Jos. de Bello Jud. Tom. II. lib. i. Cap. xxxiii. p. 1041. Hudsoni edi. see also Jos. de Antiq. Jud. Tom. II. Lib. xvii. Cap. vii. p. 769; &c.

delight. He won many to his persuasion, both of the Jews, and of the Gentiles. This was CHRIST; and although he was, at the instigation of some of our nation, and by Pilate's sentence, suspended on the cross, yet those who loved him at the first, did not cease so to do: for he came to life again the third day, and appeared to them. And to this day, there remains a sect of men, who from him have the name of Christians."\* We claim this, as the testimony of a learned, yet bigoted Jew! In this short passage is a corroboration of all the prominent declarations of the gospel respecting the Savior—his teaching—his death—at the instigation of the Jews—by the judgment of Pilate—on the cross—his resurrection—on the third day—his appearance to his followers—and their unshaken attachment to him.

We are told by Matthew, that the fame of our Savior during his life was reverberated throughout all Syria; and that there followed him, great multitudes from Galilee, Judea, Decapolis, Idumæa, from beyond Jordan, and from Tyre and Sidon. Had the records of these countries remained, or were the works of their historians extant, we might expect a large confirmation of the gospel history. However, the evidence which we shall produce to our Savior's life and ministry must be admitted on all hands, because we shall take the testimony of three enemies. JULIAN, commonly called the apostate, acknowledges that Jesus and his disciples performed many wonderful works; and he therefore calls the Savior an eminent magician. PORPHYRY allows that evil spirits were subject to him: for he says, that "after Jesus was worshipped, Esculapius and the other gods did no more converse with

\* See note 5 of this Lecture, at the end of the volume.

men." CELSUS, unable to dispute the miracles of Jesus Christ, also flies to that childish plea, the imputation of them to magic. The Jews themselves likewise, when they could not controvert the gospel history, nor deny these facts, ascribed them to Beelzebub.

We have the same evidences relative to the DEATH of Jesus. We can produce the universal testimony of ancient writers, that at the time of our Lord's life and sufferings, the rulers mentioned in the Evangelists by their name, actually *were* the governors of the day. One authentic heathen record, which is now lost, but the remembrance of which is perfectly preserved, and the existence of which can be clearly proved, was the account written by the governor of Judea, under whom our Lord was judged, condemned, and crucified. It was customary at Rome, as indeed it is in every empire to the present hour, for the prefects and rulers of distant provinces, to transmit to their sovereign, a summary relation of all the extraordinary events in their administration. That Pontius Pilate should send such an account to Rome, cannot be doubted: that he really *did*, is evident from the following testimony. JUSTIN MARTYR, who lived about a century after our Savior's death, and who suffered martyrdom in Rome, was engaged in a controversy with the philosophers at large, and particularly with Crescens the cynic. In this controversy he challenged Crescens to dispute the cause of christianity with him before the Roman senate. It is not to be believed that Crescens would have declined the contest, or have lost the opportunity of exposing his adversary before so august a body, if he could have triumphed over him in the detection of any palpable forgeries in the writings of the Evangelists, relative to either the life

or the death of our Lord. This father in his Apology, speaking of the death and sufferings of the Savior, refers the emperor, for the truth of his assertions, to the acts of Pontius Pilate. TERTULLIAN, who wrote his Apology about fifty years after Justin, says, that the emperor Tiberius, having received an account out of Palestine in Syria of the DIVINE PERSON who appeared in that country, paid him a particular regard, and threatened to punish any who should accuse the Christians: nay, that the emperor would have admitted him among the number of the deities whom he worshipped, had not the senate refused their consent. Tertullian was one of the most learned men of his age, and well skilled in the laws of the Roman empire.\* The acts of Pilate now extant, are spurious: for those to which we refer as authentic, had perished before the days of Eusebius, although they are mentioned by him.

The death of our Lord, and the manner of it, under Pontius Pilate, and in the reign of Tiberius, are mentioned both by Tacitus and Lucian.

The last melancholy scenes of the Savior's sufferings are also fully attested. The gospel history exactly coincides with the Jewish, and with the Roman customs; and the circumstances attending his dying agonies are universally admitted. Behold the Lord of life and glory hanging upon a cross! *There* could be no deception. He really suffered, he really died. The blood which stained his body, and moistened the ground, was his own heart's blood; and the tears which fell from his eyes, were the bitter tears of real and unspeakable sorrow. "The sun beheld it—no, the shocking scene drove back his chariot!" Nature sym-

\* See Addison's Evidences of the Christian Religion; also note 6, of this Lecture, at the end of the volume.

pathized with the expiring Redeemer, and heaven withdrew its light. Jesus suffered on the day in which the passover is eaten. This feast is kept on the fourteenth day of the month; and according to the Jewish mode of reckoning from the first appearance of the moon after her change, it fell on the very day in which she was at the *full*. An eclipse of the sun can only take place when the moon is between *it* and the earth; or in other words, at what we call a *new* moon: but at the *full*, the moon is in the side of the heavens opposite to the sun, and ~~we~~ are between the two bodies: there could be therefore no natural eclipse of the sun at the time of the crucifixion. Another evidence, that it was a supernatural eclipse, level to every understanding, is, that in common eclipses the sun's total darkness *can* continue but twelve or fifteen minutes at most; but this awful darkness lasted no less than *three hours*! How far the darkness extended cannot now be easily decided: the following evidence, we think, proves that it was very general:—Phlegon, the famous astronomer under the emperor Trajan, said, that “in the fourth year of the 202 Olympiad,” which was that of the death of Christ, “there was such a total eclipse of the sun at noon-day, that the stars were plainly visible.”\*—Suidas also says, that Dionysius the Areopagite, who was then at Heliopolis in Egypt, upon this surprising phenomenon exclaimed, “Either the Author of Nature is suffering, or he sympathizes with some one who does—or the frame of the world is dissolving!” Josephus bears witness to the rending the veil of the temple; and to this day, in the church of the Sepulchre, which stands on Mount

\* See note 7, of this Lecture, at the end of the volume.

Calvary, is to be seen a cleft in the rock said to be occasioned by the earthquake: which cannot certainly be proved—but it is evident, that the chasm is natural, and not the effect of art; and that the rock was rent by some violent commotions of the earth.

After the decease of our Lord, Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate, and petitioned for the body, which was granted to him. This rich man deposited it in his own “new tomb, in which never man was laid.” Of course, should a resurrection take place, it must be *that* of Jesus; it could be of no other person. The chief priests, alarmed possibly at the awful convulsions which accompanied his death, requested and obtained permission of Pilate to set a watch over the tomb. They shrouded their own fears under a pretended concern lest the people should be deceived. We have accompanied the Savior to the tomb, we have seen it sealed, we have left a Roman guard at the mouth of the sepulchre; and let the chief priests produce the body on, or after, the third day in order to silence the clamors of the deluded multitude. This, however, is not done. The plenitude of their malice was not equal to the war which they attempted to wage against the high decrees of Heaven.

The Evangelists assert that on the third day Jesus arose: and they tell a regular, plain, unvarnished tale. Let us now examine the principles on which the resurrection of Jesus is opposed.

The body was not in the sepulchre on the third day. Let the guards give an account of the loss of it—they and they alone are answerable for it. Only one account was ever attempted to be palmed upon the world—“His disciples came, and stole him while we slept.” Now observe,

1. The guards appointed over the sepulchre were Roman guards; since it will appear by the sequel of this history that they were subject to Pilate, and under his control; which would not have been the case had they been Jews, but they would have been answerable to the rulers of that nation. Now, it was death for a Roman soldier to sleep upon his watch: therefore had they been really overpowered with slumber, they would rather have feigned a miracle, when the minds of their employers were so well prepared to receive it, to save themselves from the punishment legally due to their crime, than have openly avowed it, had not higher powers said, "We will secure you." We have more instances than one upon record of jailors suffering death for the loss of their prisoners.

2. If the guards were really asleep, how came they to be so positive as to the persons who stole the body? On what principle could they affirm that the disciples were the depredators? I suppose that this is the first and the last instance in which men ever attempted to give evidence on a transaction which took place when they were confessedly asleep: or were ever called upon for such a purpose.

3. Why were not the disciples immediately apprehended and made to restore the body? It was indisputably the duty of the chief priests to produce it after the third day publicly in a state of death, and thus for ever to silence the pretensions of a deceiver. Did the enemies of Jesus lack either power or influence, to rescue a dead body from twelve unarmed, poor, defenceless men, had they seriously entertained even a suspicion that his disciples had stolen him? Did not the matter die away as soon as possible? Was there even any inquiry made into the affair? Did not the

disciples boldly, and openly, preach the resurrection of Jesus, in defiance of the threatenings of the Jews?

4. Is it probable that the timid, unbelieving disciples of Jesus Christ should have the rashness to attack a band of Roman soldiers; or to venture into the sepulchre, even had they slumbered? We feel that we have reason to complain of the want of candor in infidelity in urging its objections against christianity. Fair and open ground is relinquished for finesse and quibbling. The disciples are sometimes portrayed mean and timid men, to expose them to contempt: but when it serves the purpose of skepticism, they are represented, wise, prudent, designing, courageous, enterprising; and more is ascribed to them than human power ever yet performed. Now they cannot have too opposite characters; and we hold infidelity to the gospel history, and to its own concessions, that they were plain, uninformed, timid, unbelieving men. Were these characters to attack a legion of Roman soldiers successfully?

5. Could this immense stone have been rolled away, and the body removed, without noise and confusion sufficient to break their slumbers? Surely, they must have been dead, and not asleep!

6. Would the disciples, had they stolen the body, have remained to lay the linen clothes in order—as they were found? Is it probable that amid the confusion which such a circumstance supposes, that they would either have had leisure, or inclination, or even presence of mind, for such an arrangement?

7. Have we not proved that heathen writers, and even enemies, admitted the fact of our Savior's miracles, although they ascribed them to a false cause? Are there not in the gospels four successive instances of his raising the dead, uncontroverted? And is his

own resurrection more wonderful than these? or than that of the sleeping saints at his death? Upon the whole, then, the resurrection of Jesus never was opposed at the time by an objection that demanded a moments serious consideration: while the evidences in favor of it, are numerous, respectable, and decisive. "For I delivered unto you, first of all that which I also received: how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve. After that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once: of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all, he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." These witnesses were numerous and respectable; and they afterwards proved their sincerity by laying down their lives for their testimony.

Forty days he shewed himself alive, by "many infallible proofs:" at the expiration of which he ascended to glory. The disciples were eye-witnesses of this also. Their sincerity they shewed in their sufferings, and it was not a point in which they could be deceived. In things which fall under the eye, the clown is as good a witness as the philosopher; and in plain matter of fact, the illiterate are as capable of judging as the learned. The consequences of his ASCENSION were seen in the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon them, in a public manner, on a public occasion: and the power then conferred of working miracles, was a standing evidence of the truth of what they preached for nearly a century. This event sufficiently accounts for the subsequent wisdom and courage of the natur-

ally illiterate and timid disciples. Such are the evidences by which the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ are supported, as matters of fact: whether they be decisive and satisfactory, you must determine.

That the immediate disciples of Jesus Christ did meet together for the purposes assigned in the sacred scriptures, may be proved from the testimony of Pliny the younger: who says that "Christ was worshipped as a God among the Christians: that they would rather suffer death than blaspheme him: that they received a sacrament, and by it entered into a vow of abstaining from sin and wickedness, conforming to the advice of Paul; that they had private assemblies of worship, and used to sing together in hymns."\* This account was written about seventy years after our Savior's crucifixion.

Quadratus, who was converted to christianity, was a celebrated Athenian philosopher; and he says, that "those whom our Savior raised and healed, were not only seen while *he himself* was upon earth, but survived after his departure out of the world." "Nay," adds he, "some of them were living in our days." And both Tertullian and Arnobius assert, the conversion of multitudes of learned men, from the simple conviction of the truth of christianity, arising from evidences then within their reach, and from personal knowledge.†

We conceive that by this time, you will be ready to admit the truth of the apostle's assertion which we read to you at the opening of this Lecture: "We have

\*See Addison's Evidences. See also note 8, of this Lecture, at the end of the volume.

† Aristides and others.

not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty."

And now it is only necessary to observe, that Revelation is to us, what the star was to the wise men.

1. IN ITS NATURE. It is a light shining in a dark place. It is the "day-spring from on high visiting us." What a world was this before it arose! The shadows of ten thousand midnights could not have made a gloom so horrible; and the blackness that veiled Egypt three long days and nights, was light in comparison of this irksome, impenetrable obscurity. The trembling, feeble ray of reason, served only to make darkness visible; and the proud discoveries of philosophy shone only through the night as the twinkling of a taper, to expire when the sun arose. No cheering beam illumined either hemisphere, till this morning star was seen in the East, as the harbinger of perfect day. Then the shout was heard—"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon them that dwell in the land of the shadow of death hath the light shined." It resembled the star.

2. IN ITS SOURCE. It is remarkable that all intelligence came first from the East.—Science there uncovered all the effulgence of her radiant head, while the West was in darkness. There was the first manifestation of God; and long, very long, was this light confined to her borders. A night of superstition and of ignorance brooded on the world, while the descendants of Abraham (who was himself from the East) enjoyed the light of truth. In every respect the lands lying under the rising sun have ever had the start of us; and we have been satisfied to be their disciples. Our language, cold and torpid in itself, has borrowed

imagery from theirs. We have learned from them, in our eloquence, to thunder with the storm: to rush with the torrent: to glide with the river: to murmur with the rill; and to whisper with the breeze. From them came this volume fraught with intelligence; and Revelation, like the guiding star, arose in the East.

3. IN ITS OBJECT it resembles this star. Jesus Christ is the sum and substance of this book. Obliterate his name from these sacred pages, and you have extinguished their light, destroyed their vigor, deranged their harmony, and defaced their beauty. There is not a particle of information treasured up here, that does not, more nearly or remotely, in some way, relate to him. Not a prophecy, not an history, not a miracle, not a doctrine, not a precept, not an epistle, that is not united, by some invisible thread, to the Messiah. The express design of this record is to make us acquainted with him: to discover what he has done: to enforce what he has said: to declare what he expects: to testify of "the King of the Jews."

4. IN ITS ISSUE Revelation resembles this star. It had no sooner led these sages to the feet of Jesus Christ, than it disappeared for ever. The Bible safely conducts us to Christ, but not immediately. It therefore remains to guide our erring feet through this world, as the passage to his more immediate presence. It is necessary to discover the thousand dangers of the way, and the difficulties which we must surmount. But when we shall have arrived at our Father's house: when we shall see him, eye to eye, and face to face; when we are safely conducted to the place where he is: having fulfilled its commission, and answered its destination, *this star* also shall disappear.

O may we see him as our Prince and Lord! see him—not as did Balaam when he reluctantly predicted his coming, and said, “I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh!”—See him—not as did the Jews, who discerned no form nor comeliness in him; who saw no beauty that they should desire him; and who refused their king! See him—not as Herod, who desired to subvert his cause, and to take away his life—not with an envious, malignant eye: but see him—as did these sages, who fell down at his feet and worshipped him:—embrace him—as did Simeon, when he was about to die; and behold him—where he unveils all the splendors of his face, and fills the temple of God with light, life, and his unclouded presence!

## LECTURE XIII.

### THE CHARACTER OF THE WRITERS OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

1 JOHN 1, 1—3.

*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*

HEB. XL, 36—38.

*And others had trial of cruel mockings, and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheep-skins, and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented: (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens, and in caves of the earth.*

WHAT a sensation must the ascension of the Savior have excited in heaven and upon earth! what interest in the bosoms of some, what emotions of fear and of rage in the hearts of others! what were the reflections

of all parties upon this wonderful and impressive event? Had the chief priests *then* seen him, (and it is not impossible that from the tops of their houses at Jerusalem they *might* see him) they would have gnashed their teeth with envy and indignation, and disappointment, and have said—‘Is this the despised carpenter’s son, whom we crucified? Is this the man whom we endeavored to confine in the grave? Is this the cause which we hoped to subvert? Is this the teacher whom we labored to destroy? O fruitless efforts! He rises superior to all our designs. He triumphs over all our malice!’ But what did the disciples think? Were they not saying in their hearts, ‘Is this the friend upon whose kind and disinterested counsels we have so long relied? Is this the expiring “Author and Finisher of our faith,” whom our unbelieving fears thought to be “dead, but who is alive again, and will live for evermore?”’ John would ask, ‘Is this the Savior who permitted me to share his confidence, and to repose my head upon his bosom?’ Thomas would inquire, ‘Can this be the man, of whom my faithless heart said, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my fingers into the print of the nails, and thrust my hands into his side, I will not believe?’ Prostrate and weeping on the mount, Peter would say, ‘Is this the master whom I denied, and for whom I dared not endure a little affliction? Is this he who raised me from my vile employment, and admitted me into his glorious service; but whom I feared to own, what day my false tongue said, “I know not the man?”’ And am I, who was afraid to ‘watch with him one hour,’ and ashamed to be called his disciple, permitted to behold his glory, to participate his parting blessing, and to share the dignity of his exaltation?—“To me, who am less than the least of all saints is this grace

given?"—Would they not *all* say—"From this moment we give our fears to the four winds of heaven? "Lord we believe, help thou our unbelief!" We wait the accomplishment of thy promise, and hail the dawn of thy empire!" And while these were gazing below, lost in wonder, in love, and in admiration, were not the angels answering each other in responsive lays? "He hath ascended up on high! he hath led captivity captive! he hath received gifts for men! yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God may dwell among them!" He ascended higher, and they renewed their song—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!" As he still continued to rise, and gradually to lose sight of the earth, "the chariots of God, which are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels," waited to receive him: the celestial harps were struck yet louder; and the full chorus shouted, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in! Who is this King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle! Lift up your heads, O ye gates, even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in! Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory!" And now all the resplendent scene faded through distance from mortal vision. HIM, the heavens received; and he sat down on his Father's throne. Even then, did not a voice break from the most excellent glory, the voice of God heard and adored by all the armies of heaven? "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; and let all the angels of God worship him. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heath-

en for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession!" Still were the disciples rivetted to the spot whence he ascended: still were their eyes fixed on the point in the heavens where he disappeared: still his voice sounded in their ears, and they seemed to listen to his parting blessing. "And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken from you up into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." And they returned unto Jerusalem: but as they left the hallowed mount, surely their hearts burned within them, and they said—"Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things! And blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and amen!"

But we must now turn away from this great sight, and follow these same men through the scenes of their subsequent lives. We must also examine the conduct of those who led the way under the former dispensation, and from whose writings the mission and the claims of Jesus were proved; and it is our business this evening to present you with an outline of THE CHARACTER OF THE WRITERS OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS. Listen to the discussion of a few simple propositions upon this subject. We assert

- I. THAT THE BOOKS OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS WERE REALLY WRITTEN BY THOSE WHOSE NAMES THEY BEAR.

We can attempt to prove this position only upon one common principle of reasoning, which will, how-

ever be deemed conclusive. It is the testimony of the people to whom these oracles were committed, and the concurrent consent of all nations. A large proportion of this volume consists of the public chronicles of a whole empire; and there is an end of the good faith of nations if they admit forgeries into their public records: the very sources from which the historian draws are contaminated. With respect to the laws of Moses, the books of the respective prophets, the history of the gospels, and the epistles of the New Testament, they are allowed by the very persons *among* whom, and *for* whom, they were written, to be the productions of those very men whose names are prefixed to them. The testimony of any man respecting the historians or the poets of his own country, and especially the testimony of a whole body of people respecting their own writers, ought to be deemed decisive; because they, and they only, are competent witnesses in the affair. Now these men were Jews; and we have the testimony of the whole Jewish nation, handed down from father to son through all successive generations, from the periods when the different writers flourished to the present hour, that such and such books, were, according to their pretensions, really written by such and such persons, to whom they are ascribed; and all nations have concurred, at every point of time, in this testimony. These writers ever have been acknowledged by them; and the chronology of their works, for the most part, has been accurately determined. No man who pretends to reason can deny his assent to such evidence. He who can bring himself to reject such authority, may with equal propriety conclude that the productions of Homer or of Virgil, of Demosthenes, or of Cicero, are not really the

writings of the distinguished poets and orators whose names they bear. For these rest precisely upon the same evidence, which we now produce in favor of the sacred records—the testimony of their contemporaries, and of their countrymen, and the concurrent consent of all nations. Deny this authority in the one case, and you must necessarily destroy it in the other: neither can you (to be consistent) believe with any degree of certainty, any thing but that which falls within the immediate sphere of your own knowledge. To follow this principle what a fund of genius and of information must be destroyed! We must blot out the works of all our historians, on the pretence that they need decisive evidence; and human intelligence must be drawn from the scanty springs of three-score years and ten, furnished by a man's own life. But if the testimony of a people respecting their own writers, and the general consent of nations, be any thing: if this be the authority upon which we receive all works, and all writers: if this be the basis of all our historical certainty: then, is it ceded to the writers of the Bible, and on this general principle must it be admitted, that the books of the Old and New Testaments were really written by those whose names they bear. We affirm

II. THAT THE WRITERS WERE, FOR THE MOST PART, EYE-WITNESSES OF THE FACTS WHICH THEY RECORDED.

There is a sufficient degree of internal evidence, deducible from the different compositions themselves, to establish this assertion. Examine the first five books of the scriptures, and it will appear that Moses was necessarily an eye-witness of most of the events recorded in his law. He was present during all the plagues of

Egypt, and was constituted the great agent in producing them. He saw the water transformed into blood—the pestilence which destroyed the cattle—the insects which covered the country—the protracted night which brooded over the whole empire, Goshen excepted—and he heard the cry of despair sound from all quarters, re-echoed from the palace to the prison, when the first-born were slain. He was an eye-witness to the deliverance of the Israelites, and to their miraculous journey through the wilderness. He saw the fire which encircled Mount Sinai, and the cloud which rested upon its summit: he heard the terrible thundings, and the more fearful voice of God. He beheld every fact which he relates till they reached the very borders of Canaan. When *he* died, Joshua took the command of Israel's armies, and recorded events as they transpired, till *he* also was laid in the dust of death. The books of Judges, of Ruth, of Samuel, of the Kings, and Chronicles, although the compositions of different persons, were evidently, from their style, written at the time, and on the spot, where the events which they relate took place. This is manifest, from the simplicity of the narrations, and the appeal both to persons and to things *then* well known, the remembrance of which is *now* lost. Moreover, we are incessantly referred in the historical parts of the scriptures to books which are no longer extant, but which were *then* unquestionably esteemed faithful records; and this very circumstance proves at once the antiquity, the veracity, and the preservation of the Bible. Precisely on the same ground is the New Testament recommended to us. Listen to the language of the apostles themselves. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes,

which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life—declare we unto you!”  
We maintain,

III. THAT THE THINGS WHICH THEY DID NOT SEE, THEY DERIVED FROM THE MOST CERTAIN EVIDENCES, AND DREW FROM THE PUREST SOURCES.

If a man be incompetent to record any thing but that which he sees, history is altogether useless. But a satisfactory degree of certainty is attainable on events of which we were not eye-witnesses; and no one in this assembly doubts the signing of Magna Charta, or the battle of Agincourt, any more than if he had stood by, and seen the one fought, and the seals affixed to the other. We owe much to the integrity of others; and the mutual confidence on which society is founded, requires with justice our assent to thousands of events, which transpired long before we were born, on which, if contemporary with ourselves, were transacted at some remote spot on the face of the globe. Who will affirm that Hume or Rapin, were incompetent to produce an history, which, making some allowances for human prejudices, is worthy the confidence and credit of our countrymen? Yet neither the one nor the other was an eye-witness of more than an insignificant portion of his voluminous production. But if, by drawing from pure sources, a man is to be deemed competent to relate facts of which he was not an eye-witness: then, the writers of the Bible, in those particular events of which confessedly they were not eye-witnesses, but which they affirm with confidence, are entitled to our credit. Moses, for instance, on these principles, is competent to the relation of every event

recorded in the book of Genesis; although it is admitted that they took place before his birth, and although he goes back to the beginning of all things. From Adam to Noah, from Noah to Abraham, from Abraham to Joseph, and from Joseph to Moses, but *four* persons are necessary to transmit events as they transpired; and these four persons were Methuselah, Shem, Isaac, and Amrain, the grandfather of Moses. Those things of which the apostle Paul was not an eye-witness he most surely believed, because he lived with those who were the companions of our Lord through all his ministry, and were present during those very events which he received upon their testimony. There can be no question that he found them men of unshaken veracity. The disciple of Gamaliel was not likely to become the dupe of the designing. He must have had something like evidence to lead him to relinquish the fair prospect of worldly emolument for certain and inevitable suffering: he must have felt something like conviction to destroy the prejudices which he openly avowed, and which were sufficiently powerful to make him sanction the murder of Stephen. In every instance in which the writers of the Old and the New Testament were not eye-witnesses of the events which they recorded, it will be found, upon the closest scrutiny, that they derived their evidence from the most authentic sources. We shall prove

#### IV. THAT THEY WERE MEN OF INTEGRITY, IMPARTIALITY, AND CANDOR.

That they were men of INTEGRITY we gather from the tacit concessions of their most inveterate enemies. A thousand accusations were alleged against them

equally cruel, injurious, and unfounded. Every possible effort was made to terrify and to silence them; and scourgings, and imprisonments, and death itself, were added to menaces. They were charged with sedition, while their writings, their preaching, and their conduct, equally and powerfully enjoined, that their followers should "submit to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake." They were unjustly accused of polluting the temple. It was said that they despised the law, the purity of which they exemplified in their lives. But their integrity was never questioned, and their statement of facts was never denied. That which they affirmed, they affirmed openly: they affirmed on the spot stained with the Savior's blood, and on which the facts which they asserted were transacted: they affirmed before a whole people, who were capable of detecting imposition and exposing falsehood, if there had been either the one or the other, and whose determined enmity impelled them to seize every occasion against them: yet amid all this their integrity could not be disputed, and their veracity stood unimpeached. Nay, on all these occasions they boldly dared the trial, they challenged their adversaries to disprove their words, they defied their malice, and openly, and constantly asserted—"We are witnesses of these things!"

Their IMPARTIALITY appears in every page of their writings. Their own failings are recorded with singular and unexampled fidelity. They offer no palliation of their conduct—they conceal nothing—they alter nothing—they plead nothing. They sacrifice private feelings to the cause of truth. And with the same impartiality with which they record their own shame, they relate the weakness of their friends and fellow-disciples. We will not say, that no tear fell upon

the line which consigned to everlasting remembrance every humiliating circumstance, but that tear was not suffered to erase the narrative; we will not say, that their hand did not tremble as it wrote the sad history, but that hand firmly inscribed the truth, and gave its faithful evidence against the weakness of its master. Neither do they conceal a single circumstance of ignominy attending either their Lord or themselves. They relate all the shame of his death, and the degradation to which their conscience compelled them to submit for his sake.

Their CANDOR is seen in this, that they never magnified the rage of their enemies: never represented their characters more deformed and sanguinary than they really were: never imputed to them motives which they did not avow: never reviled, never reproached them. When they wrote the life of their Lord, it was without eulogy: when they recorded his death, there is no attempt to inflame the mind of the reader: not a single remark is made throughout the whole narrative: if they wept (and surely they *did* weep) they wept in silence, and no complaint escaped from their pen. A plain, unvarnished tale, is told throughout, and is left to make its way, unassisted, to the heart and to the conscience. Where shall we find such historians? Even skepticism must admit their integrity, their impartiality, and their candor. We advance

#### V. THAT THEY WERE WISE AND GOOD MEN.

Who will call in question the understanding or the accomplishments of Moses? Under what circumstances of honor, has his name been transmitted through ages and generations, till, irradiated with all its pristine glo-

ry, it has reached even these latter days! To a mind far above the common standard—to talents the most illustrious, he added all the learning of the Egyptians. Born at the fountain-head of literature, he drank copious draughts of the salutary stream. Before him the celebrated lawgivers of antiquity, although much later than this renowned legislator, shrink away, as the stars which shine through the night, fade before the first tints of the morning, and hide their diminished heads when the sun uncovers his radiance. In like manner all the writers of the Old and New Testaments demand our respect as men of supereminent talents, and of solid wisdom. No one can read those Psalms which are ascribed to the king of Israel, and imagine that David was a man of a *common* understanding. The fragments which have descended to us from Solomon, abundantly confirm the decision of the scriptures in naming him the wisest of men. He must be strangely destitute of taste who can read unmoved, the majestic and sublime productions of Isaiah. We disdain to answer the bold, unfounded, ignorant assertions of the author of “The Age of Reason,” who says, that “a school-boy should be punished for producing a book so full of bombast and incongruity as the book called Isaiah.” A man who can thus speak of a production so truly sublime, upon general, we might say universal consent, has forfeited all claim to criticism; and he must feel something like degradation who should sit down to answer so palpable a misrepresentation. We pass over the words of Jesus Christ, for surely it will be admitted that “never man spake as this man.” Luke rises before us as claiming to rank high in respectability. His writings will appear to any unprejudiced mind impressed with the stamp of genius and

of literature. In support of this position is it necessary to do more than appeal to the short and elegant preface to his Gospel, after which, having once for all introduced himself, he disappears, and the historian is lost in the narrative? "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye witnesses, and ministers of the word: It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee, in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou has been instructed." The apostle Paul is a name too great to be passed over in silence. His defence before Agrippa is a master-piece of genuine eloquence and feeling; and he who can deny it, after reading the sentence with which it closes, appears to us most unreasonably prejudiced, and irreclaimable by the force of evidence. "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am—except these bonds!" His writings from first to last discover an extraordinary mind, and a fund of intelligence, worthy a disciple who sat at the feet of Gamaliel. Those who were unlettered men, have no less a claim upon our respectful attention. Who does not perceive a blaze of genius and of talent bursting through all the obscurity of their birth, and counteracting the original narrowness of their education? They were *all* wise men; and their wisdom carried with it the most decisive evidence that it was from above: it was "first pure, then

peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and of good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

We have pronounced but a small part of their eulogium in saying that they were WISE men; for talents are often found united to vice: but they were also eminently GOOD men. They *were* men. We do not design to hold them up to your view as *perfect* characters: for such a representation would neither accord with truth, nor agree with their presentations: but they were as perfect as humanity in its most exalted state upon earth seems capable of being. The charges against the character of David have been heavy, but they have been as ably refuted.\* The light which he enjoyed was small, compared with the meridian glory which illumines our walk through life. And he must have an hard heart, and a most unreasonable conscience, who can urge David's failings against him, with much severity, after the contrition which he felt and expressed. Considered in connexion with the other, and excellent parts of his character, these defects resemble the dark spots, which, to a philosophic and scrutinizing eye, appear on the sun's disk; but which to any unassisted organ of vision, are swallowed up in the blaze of his glory. In the writings and the lives of the apostles, what piety, what benevolence, what devotion, what love to God and to man, are visible! What genuine zeal did they manifest! A zeal distinguished from mere enthusiasm, both in its object, and in its tendency! No good man can read these writings, such is their holy fervor, and such their exalted piety, without being made both wiser and better! Do you not discern in them hearts weaned from

\* In Chandler's life of David.

the present world, and fired with the glorious prospects of futurity? Do you not perceive in all things an integrity which made them ardent in the support of their cause, and ready to suffer every extremity for it? Yet that integrity, and that ardor, mingled with humility, temperance, mildness, goodness, and truth? Do they not continually insist upon these things as the genuine effects, the necessary consequences, and the distinguishing characteristics, of their religion? O let any unprejudiced person calmly sit down to read their lives, where all their weaknesses appear, and where none of their faults are extenuated, and he must conclude that they were good men!

We might, without departing much from our plan, draw up by way of contrast the lives and actions of the principal adversaries of Révelation, and oppose them to those of its first assertors. We think that the confessions of Rousseau would look but ill when placed by the penitential tears of Peter, or the contrite sighs of David. The licentious life, and the gloomy death of Voltaire, would be a striking contrast to the labors, the patience, the perils, and above all, the triumphant expiring moments of Paul. We shall not, however, pursue this subject. These lives will be contrasted another day. But we will add—that before the patrons of infidelity speak so bitterly of the failings of David, they should place by his life, the conduct of its most strenuous, and most distinguished advocates; and the comparison would reflect but little honor, and little credit, upon themselves. The writers of the Bible were wise and good men. We believe

VI. THAT THEY HAD THE BEST MOTIVES IN ALL THAT  
THEY DID OR WROTE.

We can only judge of motives from the honest professions which men make, and the integrity of conduct which confirms and establishes these professions. And when we see them acting disinterestedly, and encountering calamity under the profession of kindness to others: when we are persuaded that in no one instance they seek to serve themselves: but that, on the contrary, the plan which they follow must terminate in their temporal ruin—we must give them credit for their professions, and may safely conclude that their motives are pure. Now it is easy to prove, that this was the case with the first adherents of revelation, and the first preachers of the Gospel. Men are accustomed usually to act either from motives of benevolence, or from motives of interest. The prophets and apostles wrote and acted not from the latter, while there is a fulness of evidence that they were influenced by the former. Under interested motives we may include the love and hope of fame, of wealth, of applause, of whatever may tend to render the man more noted, and more respectable. By benevolent motives we understand disinterested motives; comprising love to God and to man, apart from every selfish impulse; and such motives as will lead the man cheerfully to relinquish his own comforts for the benefit of society at large, or for conscience-sake. Now we will venture to make our appeal to infidelity itself, and to ask, whether the writers of the Bible have not a fair and honorable claim to benevolent motives? What interest had Moses in relinquishing the crown of Egypt, to head the insulted, outcast, enslaved Israelites, and to lead them through a perilous journey to the possession

of a remote country, over the borders of which he himself never passed, and which he never saw, but at a distance? Had ambition or fame been his object, he had only to wait the death of Pharaoh, when, recommended as he was by talents, the choice of Egypt had probably fallen upon him, and with its armies at his command, with its forces under his control, and with its resources for his resort, according to all human appearance, he might have effected his purpose with greater ease, and certainly would have enjoyed more temporal splendor. What interest had Isaiah, or any of the prophets, in pronouncing, and recording, denunciations which provoked their countrymen, and which superinduced not only immediate hardships and bitter imprisonments, but eventually terminated in their martyrdom? What interest had Luke to serve in overlooking a liberal and respectable profession as a physician, to link his life and his fortunes with those of an houseless Nazarene, and a few outcast Galileans, his wandering disciples? What interest had Paul to serve, in descending from the sphere of applause and of honor in which he moved as a Pharisee, to encounter the danger, the disgrace, and the death annexed to a profession of christianity? What motives of interest could lead the first propagators of the christian religion to provoke the fury of an enraged populace, to draw down upon themselves the wrath of the rulers, to oppose the prejudices not merely of their countrymen, but of the whole heathen world, to endure the loss of all things, and to suffer death itself, in defence of the doctrines which they promulgated, the precepts which they taught, or the facts which they related? Deluded men, infidelity may think, and call them: but interested men, no one, with truth, or even the sen-

blance of truth, can aver that they were! Let it not be said that they expected applause, and were not acquainted with the sad consequences that would result from the line of conduct which they pursued. They were neither fools nor mad; and common sense was sufficient to convince them of their danger. If they had not been originally suspicious of it, their Master plainly predicted it; and they had before their eyes, the fearful evidence of what they were to expect, in his excruciating and ignominious death. They did not surely expect better treatment than their Lord: and no man could, with such an example before him, teach christianity from interested motives.

In justice to them, therefore, we ought to conclude, that they had the best of motives in all that they did and wrote. As this may be gathered from their sufferings, so also may it be collected from all that they taught. Did they ever say any thing with a view to entice men, or to purchase the favor of the great and the noble? Did they flatter them by giving license to the sins to which they were prone, or by permitting the indulgence of their tempers and lusts? Did they dazzle them with the promise of ease, comfort, splendor, fame, or emolument? Did they not oppose their prejudices, their principles, their vices, and their passions? Did they not delineate christianity in faithful colors, and paint all the ignominy and danger involved in a profession of it? Surely this was not the way to obtain human applause, or to serve interested motives! But what did they say of themselves? Let us hear the apostle Paul explain his own motives to the elders of the Ephesian church, in the solemn moment of eternal separation from them. "Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I

have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptations which befel me by the lying in wait of the Jews; and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things which shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying, that bonds and imprisonments abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God"—Therefore watch, and remember that by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears—"I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered to my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak; and to remember the words of our Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."—Is this the language of an interested man? and above all of an interested man at such a moment? We will not multiply passages in which similar protestations are used relative to their own conduct; and you are bound to believe them, because neither their lives nor their doctrines were those of persons who are actuated by interested motives. Otherwise they would soon have relinquished so hopeless a scheme. At the very com-

mencement of their labors one was stoned,\* another beheaded,† the greater part of them scattered over strange cities,‡ and their cause and their sect every where spoken against.¶ You see them, nevertheless, steadfast, immoveable, abounding in the work of the Lord, preaching Jesus with all diligence, knowing that their labor was not in vain in the Lord. Surely, we must admit, that they were actuated by the best of motives, in all that they did and wrote. Observe,

VII. THAT THEY THEMSELVES BELIEVED, AND WERE GUIDED BY THE TRUTHS WHICH THEY TAUGHT.

This proposition stands allied to the preceding one, and the same train of reasoning will fairly establish it. They suffered death for the cause which they attempted to promulgate, and this was a decisive evidence that they believed it. It is readily granted that martyrdom is no evidence of the goodness of a cause, or of the truth of the religion, which the man believes, and for which he dies. Many have suffered in a bad cause; and many have died for a false religion. The enthusiasm of a Roman more than once led him to sacrifice himself for his country; and superstition has also boasted her martyrs—still boasts them on the plains of Indostan, and among untutored savages. Martyrdom, however, we may fairly assert is a proof of *sincerity* in the person who suffers; and this is all that we wish to prove in the present instance. We urge the sufferings and the death of the apostles upon you, not as an evidence of the truth of their religion (it is founded on stronger arguments than these,) but

\* Acts vii, 59.

‡ Acts viii, 1—4; xi, 19.

† Acts xii, 2.

¶ Acts xxviii, 22.

as a decisive proof of their sincerity, and as an invincible demonstration that they really believed what they taught. You may add to this the simplicity of their manners, of their narratives, of their preaching, and of their lives, strongly presumptive, to say the least, of their unaffected sincerity. Nor will any man be able to investigate their characters and deportment, without acquitting them of all design to deceive. The same arguments will hold good in favor of the writers of the Old Testament. The prophets suffered death for their predictions, and those who did not, manifested, by their lives, their belief of the truths which they taught.

They not only believed, but were *guided*, by these things. Those only can enter into the argument by which we establish this assertion, who are accustomed to read the Bible; and indeed he who opposes Revelation, ought, in reason and in justice, to be as well acquainted with the sacred writings, as the man who professedly maintains it. Upon a comparison between the lives of the apostles and prophets, and their writings, we are persuaded it will be found, that the one is an exact transcript of the other. The benevolence and charity which they recommended to others, they felt themselves. The love to Jesus Christ which they taught, warmed their own bosoms. He was the object of *their* faith, of their hope, of their joy, of their worship. In him all their wishes and expectations centred; and for him, they were willing to live or to die. They exemplified the christian patience and meekness, which they recommended to their hearers, in their own resignation and uncomplaining sufferings. They could make their appeal to their conversation and say, "Brethren, be ye follow-

ers of us, even as we are also of Christ." Upon every investigation of their lives and writings, it will be found that they themselves were guided by the truths which they taught to others. One more proposition will conclude what we have to advance respecting the writers of the Bible; and indeed it may be considered as a concluding inference from all the foregoing series of reasoning. It is

VIII. THAT IT APPEARS UPON THE WHOLE, THAT THEY NEITHER COULD BE DECEIVED, NOR WOULD DECEIVE, IN ALL THAT THEY WROTE AND ASSERTED.

That they could not be deceived, is evident from the nature of the case. We have said that they were for the most part eye-witnesses of what they recorded; this was eminently the fact in respect of the apostles. They conversed with Jesus Christ—they saw all the miracles, that he wrought—they were present when he expired on the cross. When he rose from the dead, he appeared to them, and to "above five hundred brethren at once." He ascended to heaven in their presence. He afterwards appeared to Paul in the way to Damascus, and to John in the Isle of Patmos.—We have proved the same respecting the writers of the Old Testament, and particularly Moses. We have shewn, that what they did not see, they derived from the most certain evidences, and drew from the purest sources. Now such was the nature of the circumstances which they related, and the nature of the evidences which they possessed, that they *could not be deceived*. This we think a fair inference from the general train of our reasoning.

And it is equally evident from their characters, that they *would not deceive*. To suppose them capable of

this, is to lay them under the blackest of all imputations, and to discover hardened guilt, of which human nature, depraved as it is, appears hardly capable. We have proved that they themselves could not be mistaken: *then*, they must, if they deceived at all, have voluntarily become "false witnesses of God," and have forged falsehoods from first to last. Their lives were, on these principles, one continued scene of perjury, hypocrisy, and blasphemy. Pretending that God sanctioned their preaching, and sent them for this purpose, while in their hearts they knew it to be false, was impiety beyond almost the power of conception! In every instance they would be found to be liars; and they must, for no possible advantage, but in face of every danger, have deceived their fellow men solemnly and deliberately, day after day, through all their lives. They must have *confederated* to do this; and have stricken hands upon an engagement more terrible than death, and blacker than the designs of hell itself ever unfolded. This impious conduct would have been cruel to the last degree. They were trifling with the dearest and most important interests of mankind—worse than trifling, they were consigning them in cold blood to infamy, to torment, and to ruin. They were leading them to rely for peace and salvation upon a man whom they knew to be an impostor, and who had suffered publicly as a criminal. They were bringing all the calamities inseparable from their religion, knowing it to be false, upon the people whom they deceived. They exposed the lives of the innocent, in leading them to patronize a guilty fraud (by persuading them that it was true) which the rulers did not sanction; and their blood, on this supposition, with the tears of their orphans, of their widows, of their

bereaved families, must have mingled with the perjury and the blasphemy of their deceivers, in calling down the vengeance of heaven against a combination so horrible. They would, in a word, have been a society of the most infamous, cruel, abandoned wretches, that ever lived on the face of the globe: if, as they could not be deceived, they were capable of deceiving on a subject so important! And the men who confederated with them in forming the other parts of the scripture, must have entered into a plot to destroy thousands of lives here, to send the most dreadful calamities on the earth, and to ruin the interests of men for ever!

Now calmly examine the writings, the character, the deportment of the writers of the Old Testament and of the apostles of Jesus Christ, and say whether they appear to you to be the men capable of such deception, or likely to form a plot so horrible? What could induce them to do it? What interest had they to serve by it? It is not possible! But as they could not be deceived, so every thing conspires to prove that they would not deceive.

The fact is simply this. Their original talents were not considerable: their education was contracted: their sphere of life of the lowest order: their fears and unbelief abundant: their numbers small; and their minds bowed in the first instance by the prejudices of their country, all which prejudices were against a suffering Messiah. When they consented to share his ignominy, it was from a conviction resulting from the purity of his life, the force of truth in his teaching, the integrity of his character, and not from any resemblance which they traced between his situation and their preconceived opinions. Every day developed

something respecting him which disappointed their expectations, excited their astonishment, offended their pride, and opposed their views. Their minds were slowly enlightened, and they had not at the moment of his resurrection very clear views, either of the prophecies respecting him, or of his testimony respecting himself. Let these circumstances be calmly considered, let the amount of them be deliberately weighed, and it will be evident to every reflecting mind, that it would be a miracle of the first order, if twelve, or rather eleven (for one of them betrayed the Lord) such men, should have attempted to palm, as a fact, an invention upon the very people among whom it was said to have taken place: that they should have had the genius to project such a design: and above all, that they should have been successful in disseminating their fabrication, and in establishing it upon a basis which eighteen centuries have not been able to undermine! Such a supposition is too palpably absurd to bear reasoning upon. If it be objected that their subsequent deportment manifests genius, firmness, unbounded intellect, and astonishing energy of mind, a question arises, what was the cause of this change of character? We answer that this fact is in itself an evidence of the truth of their mission, inasmuch as it resulted from the sufferings and the resurrection of the Savior: it took place at a moment when there were thousands of witnesses present—"Parthians and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and Proselytes, Cretes and Arabians:" it was evinced by the gift of tongues, so that the multitude wondered to hear

themselves addressed every man in his own language, while many of them knew that these very persons were before ignorant and unlettered; and it was accompanied by miraculous powers, which their adversaries could neither gainsay nor resist, and which were in force nearly a century.

The appeals which they made were not the language of imposition. Neither in their preaching, nor in their writings, did they ever lose sight of the facts asserted in the gospels, and especially of the death of their Master, in all its circumstances, and all its consequences. They did not cease to press it upon the memory, the feelings, the hearts, and the consciences of those who attended their ministry, the major part of whom were, in most instances, the murderers of the Lord of life and glory. They laid this sin to their charge, with undaunted courage, with invincible perseverance, with unshaken fidelity, when they said—"Ye denied the Holy One, and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead: whereof we are witnesses." We have seen these faithful appeals confirmed in their sufferings, this bold and generous testimony written with their blood, this strong and resistless evidence sealed by their death!

On these points we have the concessions of enemies. These things were not done in a corner. Others were also eye-witnesses of this event. The adversaries of the primitive Christians cast in their teeth the poverty of their Master's life, and the ignominy of his death. By these means, while they designed to affix indelible disgrace to the cause of christianity, they decidedly proved that the facts recorded in the gospels respecting Jesus of Nazareth were strictly and indisputably true.

In their public records, in their judicial statements, in their epistolary correspondence, the sufferings of the apostles and first disciples of our Lord were avouched, and their firmness branded with the name of *madness*. It was a subject of surprise and amazement to the heathen world that men would submit to the most horrible tortures, the cruelty of human ingenuity could invent, rather than deny a poor, outcast, obscure Jew, who suffered, at the instigation of his countrymen, the death of a murderer! Ah, they knew not Jesus of Nazareth! knew not the secret and resistless bond which held his disciples to him! knew not the sweetness of his love! But in the mean time, they have left to every succeeding generation a decided testimony that these things were so.\*

We detain you only to offer two concluding remarks respecting the best mode of reading the Bible to advantage. The *first* shall regard the ALLOWANCES which should be made in consulting this sacred volume. Whoever has paid any, the least, attention to it, must recollect that there are allusions to customs which exist no longer; and that its sublime and poetic parts are filled with figures of speech not altogether familiar to us. We are surrounded by imagery, and reading a language perfectly new—more bold and striking than these colder climes and tongues usually exhibit. When you take up the scriptures make these several allowances. Remember that you are reading the record of ages which have rolled away, and of nations, which have either long since perished, or which exist no longer in the same form. You should allow for the swelling metaphoric *style of the*

\* See the note of this Lecture, at the end of volume. |

*East.* Their mode of expression is always bold and magnificent beyond the imagination of an European; and the face of their country is also widely different. You must remember the *customs then prevalent*: these change perpetually with the lapse of time; and the manners of antiquity were altogether distinct from those sanctioned by the fashion of the present day. Consider the *countries in which they lived*. Every country has a mode of operation, and habits, peculiar to itself. Recollect the *persons to whom they wrote*; persons who were conversant with the metaphors employed, and with the facts recorded; persons who were contemporary with them, and who had the advantage of making appeals to things and to evidences which exist no longer. And while you call these things to your memory, do not forget *the changes* which have taken place in all these particulars.

Our *second* remark shall relate to the SPIRIT in which the Bible should be read. Consult it divested so far as possible of prejudice, and with a sincere desire both to attain improvement, and to search out the truth. The investigation which we recommend, lies equally between that inactivity which slumbers for ever over things acknowledged, and that impetuous temerity which relying upon its own powers disdains assistance, attempts a flight beyond the precincts of lawful subjects, and with licentious boldness pries into those "secret things which belong to God." Some float for ever on the surface of admitted truths, fearful to rise above the level over which they have hovered from the first moment of consciousness. These resemble those birds which feed upon the insects dancing on the water, who never rise into the air, but always skim the surface of the lake, on the borders of which they re-

ceived life. Others, on bold, adventurous wing, rise into the trackless regions of mystery, till they sink from the pride of their elevation, perplexed and exhausted. These, by aiming at too much lose every thing. Because they have attempted unsuccessfully to investigate that, which God has been pleased to put out of the reach of human comprehension, they will not believe any thing—they embrace a system of universal skepticism. So Noah's dove beheld on every side a boundless expansion of waters; and whether she rose or sunk was equally bewildered, and found no rest for the sole of her foot. There is one point of difference, and that is, that she returned to the ark; but those whom we have described, too often are found to turn despisers, who wonder and perish. But the Christian is bold in investigating *all* that God has submitted to his researches, attempts every thing leaning on Almighty energy, and relies with implicit confidence upon the written word. So the eagle rises boldly into the air, keeping the sun in view, and builds her nest upon a rock.

We would not have you, with the inactive and supine, always coast the shore: nor with the infidel venture into the boundless ocean without pilot, or compass, or ballast, or anchor: exposed equally to the quicksands, to the rocks, to the whirlpool, and to the tempest: but we are desirous that, like the Christian, you should boldly face, and patiently endure the storm, with the Bible as your compass, Hope as you anchor, God as your pilot, and Heaven as your country.

## LECTURE XIV.

### CONCLUDING LECTURE.

THE UNSEARCHABLE GOD: OR, AN ATTEMPT TO PROVE AN ANALOGY BETWEEN THE RELIGION OF NATURE AND THAT OF THE BIBLE, BY SHEWING THAT THE SAME OBSCURITY WHICH OVERSHADOWS REVELATION, EQUALLY OVERSPREADS NATURE AND PROVIDENCE.

JOB XXXVI, 14.

*Lo, these are parts of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power, who can understand?*

MAN is a needy, dependent creature, from his birth to his death. His first cry is the voice of want and helplessness; his last tear flows from the same source; and in no one intermediate period of his life, can he be pronounced independent. His eye, the moment it is opened, is turned upon another for assistance. His limbs must be sheltered from the cold: his nutriment provided, and his wants supplied by the care and exertions of others: or he would perish in the hour of his birth. A few months expand his limbs; and then a new train of wants succeeds. He must be watched with incessant vigilance, and guarded with unceasing care and anxiety, against a thousand diseases, which wait to precipitate him to a premature grave. The quivering flame of an existence scarcely communicated, is exposed to sudden and furious blasts, and it requires all a parent's skill to interpose a screen which

may prevent its extinction; and, alas! after all, such interposition as human skill and tenderness can supply, are often ineffectual, and the prevailing blast extinguishes the sickly fire.

The child begins to think, and a new field of exertion is opened to the mother. He needs direction, and is dependent upon her wisdom and affection for his earliest sources of information. She watches and facilitates the dawn of reason. She teaches her child for what end he came into the world; and in language adapted to his capacity, exhibits to the inquiring mind, and pours into the listening ear, his high and immortal destination. Oh, then with what anxiety she watches the speaking countenance! With what skill she directs the passions! With what assiduity she strives to irradicate, or at least to bring into subjection his visible propensity to evil and the impulses of a depraved nature! Who among us cannot look back to this early period, and remember a mother's short, impressive conversation—her intreaties—her caresses—her restrictions—and her tears?

The boy advances in wisdom and in stature, and in strength: but he is still dependent. And now he must pass into other hands. There are many things which it is necessary for him to know, and to learn, in order to his passage through life with respectability, which it is not a mother's province to teach him. Besides, it is needful that he should sojourn for a season with strangers, to prepare him for the approach of that time, when he must quit the paternal roof for ever, and force his way through the wide world!

Grown up at length to manhood, he is still dependent. He lives by conferring and receiving mutual offices of kindness. It is not good for him to be alone. He links his fortunes and his interests, his hopes and his

fears, his joys and his sorrows, with those of another. His duties and his responsibilities, multiply upon him. The circle is widened. He finds others dependent upon *him*, while he is not himself independent. And all his difficulties and sufferings are lightened by being divided.

Behold him stretched upon the bed of death, having reached the extremity of this transient existence, still a poor, dependent, needy creature! To that heart he looks for sympathy: that bosom must support his languishing head: that hand must adjust the pillow, and administer the cordial, and wipe away the dew of death, and close the extinguished eye. Into the bosom of his companion through life, or of his child, or of his friend, he breathes the last sigh!

Revelation meets man on the terms of his nature, addresses him, and suffers him to address God, as a needy dependent creature. It proves its divine origin by its adaptation to the wants and the wishes of humanity. It is directed to every man, as the son of Adam, and the child of sorrow, and the slave of ignorance. But vain man will be wise: will not be instructed: will believe nothing which he cannot comprehend; and rejecting the truth, will not come to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

When we speak of magnitude and diminutiveness, of beauty and homeliness, of wisdom and folly, it is by comparison; and each of these terms are exchanged, the former for the latter, when the objects to which they were applied, are placed by the side of something more magnificent, more lovely, more sapient. The productions of human skill are grand; and we pronounce the "solemn temple" magnificent, when contrasted with surrounding and inferior buildings: but when set in comparison with the temple of the sky, it

is magnificent no longer—it shrinks into nothing. I see a picture of the evening: I admire the painter's art in so judiciously blending his light and his shade; a soft and sober tint overspreads the whole piece, and I pronounce it beautiful;—but when I compare it with the sunset of nature, when I see the west inflamed with ethereal fire, blushing with ten thousand vivid and various splendors, while the distant mist slowly creeps along the line of the horizon, and forms a contrast to the brilliancy above it the effort of art is swallowed up in the sublimity of nature—and it is beautiful no longer. I admire the genius and the understanding of the philosopher; I reverence the superior intelligence of a Solomon; I look up humbled to a Newton, exploring the immensity of yonder firmament, reducing the apparent confusion of its orbs to order, laying the planetary system under laws, tracing their orbits, and scrutinizing their nature—and I pronounce these, wise men: but I raise my eyes—and behold an higher order of creatures around the throne of God, before whom even Newton is a child; and presuming into “the heaven of heavens,” I am lost in HIM, who charges even these superior beings with folly.”

The powers of the human mind are said to be large and capacious: they are so when compared with those of every other terrestrial being in the creation of God. Man walks abroad, the monarch of this world. Of all the diversified tribes which the hand of Deity formed, into man alone was “breathed the breath of life, and he became a living soul.” The animal soon reaches his narrow standard, and never passes it. The powers of man are in a constant state of progression; and probably in the world of spirits they will be found to be illimitable. But whatever they may be in their nature, they are at present contracted in their operations.

To what do they amount when called into action? To speak a few languages: to decypher a few more in a various character: to ascertain here and there a cause by tracing it upwards from its effects: to number seven planets revolving round the sun: to send imagination into infinite space in search of other systems, till she is bewildered and tired in her progress: to float on the bosom of the air suspended from a globe of silk; or to sail over the surface of the ocean in a vessel of his own construction: to ascend the hoary summit of the loftiest mountain, or to penetrate a fathom or two the surface of the earth: these are the boundaries of human effort. And in searching out the little he is capable of learning, what difficulties he must meet! what embarrassments he must surmount! what labors he must undergo! what time he must expend! And after all, how little has he gained! how much remains unexplored! how uncertain, and probably how erroneous, are his best grounded conclusions! And if we elevate our thoughts to those spirits, whose powers in our limited apprehension are unbounded, we shall find upon inquiry that they also are limited creatures. There are subjects present to the divine mind which the angels do not know: mysteries, which the capacity of Gabriel cannot fathom, and which the intelligence of a seraph cannot unravel. How much less "man who is a worm, and the son of man who is but a worm?"

The subject for discussion this night, is thus proposed—THE UNSEARCHABLE GOD: OR, AN ATTEMPT TO PROVE AN ANALOGY BETWEEN THE RELIGION OF NATURE AND THAT OF THE BIBLE, BY SHEWING THAT THE SAME OBSCURITY WHICH OVERSHADOWS REVELATION, EQUALLY OVERSPREADS NATURE AND PROVIDENCE.

Of this unsearchable Being, this infinite Mind, Job writes; and we are now to contemplate rather what we do *not* know of him, than that which we are able to comprehend: since upon the closest investigation of the whole which he has submitted to our researches, we are compelled to conclude, “Lo, these are parts of his ways, and how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand?” We shall apply these words, in order to the development of our subject,

I. TO THE WORKS OF CREATION.

II. TO THE MYSTERIES OF PROVIDENCE.

III. TO THE INVISIBLE WORLDS:

IV. TO THE WORD OF REVELATION;—and this arrangement is justified by the whole connexion of the text. We apply them,

#### I. TO THE WORKS OF CREATION.

“He stretcheth out the north over the empty place and hangeth the earth upon nothing.”

To the first gaze of man newly-created, the temple of the sky presented itself, filled with glorious objects, which furnished food for his curiosity, and employment for the new-born powers of his mind. He saw the whole expansion covered with stars twinkling through the blue ether. He beheld the sun rise in the east, and disappear behind the western hills. The moon occupied his vacated seat in the heavens, and every night changed her hour of rising. As yet the laws by which these “greater lights” are governed were unknown; and whether the lesser sparks were mere ornaments of the curtain stretched out on every side, or worlds and suns diminished by distance, the man doubted: for in the infancy of time, philosophy had

not kindled her torch, and every thing was to be learned. He regarded it, however, as a scene of magnificence; and considered the whole as the work of him, "parts of whose ways" only, are after all submitted to our investigation.

As years rolled on, a multitude of researches into nature were instituted. Art lent her auxiliary powers: a few instruments were invented to aid the eye, or to help the imagination; and a regular inquiry into the secret laws of this great universe, was formed and prosecuted. Time gradually matured the crude and undigested hypotheses of the enlightened mind. Each man took his department. One applied the telescope to the organ of vision, and ascertained the nature, and read the laws, of yonder shining orbs. Another bent his attention to the productions of the globe, and to the animals that move upon its surface. A third investigated the properties of water and of air, and the several uses to which they are applicable. A fourth studied the structure of the human frame, and applied his knowledge to the purpose of relieving the springs of life. These all were still acquainted only with "*parts of his ways.*"

When the astronomer has spent his whole life in reading the splendid volume which the night unfurls, what has he at length learned? He has proved that the globe on which we live is spherical: that it turns upon its axis once in twenty-four hours, and revolves round the sun in twelve months: that yonder glorious orb, the centre of our system, is a body of fire:\* that the planets are probably worlds like our own: that the moon appears to have seas and continents, islands and

\* See the note at the end of the volume.

mountains: thus far can he go, but no further! He launches into infinite space, which Job here calls "the empty place," and is lost! Those lights that sparkle at distances so immense, may, or may not, be suns, and the centres of other systems. All is uncertainty and perplexity; and the comet that shoots across the system of which our own world is a part, wheels through its orbits, and round the sun, flies off, and derides the efforts of man, to describe its sphere, or to foretel its return! "Lo, these are *parts* of his ways!"

Human ingenuity and human courage have been exhausted in reiterated attempts to approach the poles: but life cannot be sustained among their horrors. The spark of existence is quenched amid snows that never melt: ices, that resist the impression of the sun's distant rays: a winter that never ceases to rage: a cold that freezes the vitals! And if the man were able to reach these extremities of the globe, what could he learn more than Job ascertained thousands of years back: that "he stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing:" that having suspended the globe, and drawn its orbit, it hangs self-sustained, as human skill could not balance a feather. Philosophy needs poles to explain its revolutions; and imagination must be assisted by supposing a line drawn through the globe and extended obliquely to the north star: these things the contraction of our powers require science to supply, that we may comprehend more easily the laws of nature: but he who made the world gave it not these encumbrances, and it is poised in empty space, without any support but his command.—"Lo, these are *parts* of his ways."

He who spends his life in scrutinizing the minutiae of nature is puzzled at every step of his investigation;

and in the open fields understands as little of the unsearchable God, as the astronomer who wanders bewildered among the planets. A blade of grass, an ear of wheat, an acorn, plunges him into difficulties, from which neither reason nor philosophy can extricate him. He knows not how that diminutive and spiral leaf, upon which he tramples, grows and vegetates! Why must that grain of corn die, before it can spring up? And how is it, that a particle in it no larger than an atom, the only particle that survives the corruption of the grain, will multiply, and increase, and produce "thirty, sixty, an hundred fold?" How inconceivable that an insignificant acorn should contain all the component principles of a stately oak, the pride of the forest! In fact, a particle of sand, and a drop of water, are replete with subjects of curiosity and of wonder. The air which we breathe, refuses to submit the whole of its properties to our researches. In vain it is attempted to be exhausted, compressed, tortured—it is understood to be elastic, to rest with an incredible pressure upon the surface of the body equally on all parts, and we cannot press the matter further. He who bestowed it alone can make the thin fluid which the lungs inhale to sustain life, the vehicle of death: and he *can* heighten its rarification to a pitch too subtile for the organs adapted to its action, or load it with gross and fatal vapors, and thus constitute it the instrument of mortality in another shape.—"Lo, these are *parts* of his ways."

He who attends to the structure of the human frame, may, from little knowledge of its parts which he is able to obtain, trace the progress of disease, and allay the fermentation and fever of the blood, by medicine, or by diminishing the quantity of the heated fluid; he

may assist the efforts of nature, and counteract in some measure, by the skilful application of science, the power of disease: but he cannot restore a single fibre destroyed, nor protract the life a moment beyond its appointed period; and, after all, he can know but the more obvious parts of this complicated machine, while its secret springs escape his most diligent researches. "Lo, these are *parts* of his ways, and how *little* a portion is heard of him?" As in the works of CREATION, so is the Deity equally unsearchable,

## II. IN THE MYSTERIES OF PROVIDENCE.

"He holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it."

Most eminently in this respect "*parts*" only "of his ways" are submitted to our understanding; and he who objects to Revelation, because it involves in it mysteries which he cannot fathom, ought, to be consistent, on the same principles to deny the superintendence of Providence, to reject the religion of nature (so called) and to doubt his own existence, all of which include an equal and correspondent degree of obscurity and uncertainty. The history of the world presents scenery incessantly changing; and without being able to assign a reason for it, we see this nation, rising into distinction and that, falling into irretrievable desolation. One empire is swallowed up of another. The politics of this world present a discordant chaos, where all sorts of contrarieties are blended together; and it is the voice of God alone that can hush the uproar, and silence the strife; the hand of God alone that can harmonize these contending principles, and reconcile these violent oppositions; and the wisdom of God alone that can command a beautiful

world to emerge from this dark, disordered, formless abyss. Here, we see a man signaling himself upon this great theatre, led by an invisible hand, surmounting opposition, and performing seeming impossibilities.

The strength of nations melts before him; and with resistless energy he overruns with his forces the mightiest kingdoms. He goes on to add dominion, to dominion, till he has subjugated the world; and this for no apparent reason! Such was Alexander; and modern history may be thought to present his counterpart! Again, we see a large empire dismembered—swallowed up in a night, or gradually mouldering by the revolt of this and the other province—all apparently, the work of chance—all indisputably the operation of an infinite, and unsearchable Agent. So the extent of Alexander's conquests, was equalled only by their rapidity; and with correspondent velocity, after his death his empire hastened to ruin: till Rome trod in his footsteps, and again held the world in chains. So Cyrus was conducted by an invisible hand to victory; and Babylon fell in a single night.

By the aid of Revelation we obtain a little light on this obscure subject. We are led behind the scene, and a "*part*" of the whole is developed. One or two of the wheels of the machine are submitted to our examination, that we may gather from our inspection of the construction of these, the harmony and consistency, the wisdom and stability, the power and immensity of the whole; and that we may be convinced that he who condescends *now* to explain one or two enigmas, can, and will hereafter, in his own time and way, explain *all*. We see why Alexander was permitted to conquer—that the gospel of Jesus might be facilitated in its progress by the boundaries of empires being broken up, and a

free intercourse subsisting in all parts of the globe: and why Augustus decreed an enrolment—that Joseph and Mary might be called from their obscurity, and the Messiah born, according to the decision of prophecy, at Bethlehem. The tide of human affairs, however agitated and impeded by counter-currents, swells in its progress, and amid all its windings sets irresistably towards the ocean of the divine purposes, in which it is ingulfed and lost.—“Lo, these are *parts* of his ways! but how *little* a portion is heard of him?”

If we withdraw our attention from the affairs of empires, and selecting a family, fix it upon an individual, the same perplexity appears upon the surface of his trials; and the same measure of illumination is cast upon the darkness of his path, when God condescends to unravel a portion of his own designs. We will appeal to the experience of that patriarch, whose singular providential trials have rendered him so often an object of selection to illustrate this assertion. Who, that saw the situation of Jacob, reduced to despair by the mysterious disappearance of his darling son, the detention of Simeon, and the demand for Benjamin to go into a strange country, a country in which his brother was imprisoned, would not have said, as he did, “All these things are against me?” We read these hallowed pages, and perceive that the loss of his first child was to preserve his own life, and that of all his family; and that the imprisonment of a second, and the demand for the third, were the means of the developement of the whole, and restored him to the arms of his long lamented Joseph!—“Lo, these are *parts* of his ways!” How small is the proportion of providential mystery which is explained! How large that which is yet left involved in darkness, and perplexed in end-

less intricacy; How often he passes by us and we perceive him not: he works on our right and on our left hand, and we cannot trace: we hear the sound of his footsteps, unable to behold him! "He holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it." On the testimony of the scriptures a Christian will believe that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose:" but *how* they co-operate is known only to HIM who "sees the end from the beginning," and whose wonder-working hand educes good out of evil. *We* know but little; and *that* little, how imperfectly! "Lo, these are *parts* of his ways! but how *little* a portion is heard of him?" Again we apply these words,

### III. TO THE INVISIBLE WORLDS.

"Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering."

We all look forward with anxiety and suspense to that unknown state to which we hasten. When we miss from the circle of our friendships, the companions of our way, we cast many a wishful glance across the abyss at our own feet, and make many a fruitless attempt to penetrate the obscurity that hides its secrets from our inquiring eyes. There was a time when the conscious heart of man vibrated with the palpitations of fearful anticipation and suspense, as he descended "the valley of the shadow of death;" for Revelation was not there to guide and to support his trembling and uncertain steps. Ah, then how bitter was the parting sigh! Then the strained eye-balls were turned towards the mouth of the vale where the last glimmerings of light lingered; and as the invisible

hand irresistibly urged the reluctant wretch forwards, horror and dismay suspended all his faculties; chill despair crept through all his vitals, and brooded heavy at his heart; and a darkness which might be felt, oppressed and overwhelmed the departing spirit. Blessed be the hand that has rolled the cloud from the mouth of the grave, and for ever chased these accumulated horrors! "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away!" Now as we approach that awful hour in which the strongest powers of nature fail, the visions of God burst upon the enraptured sight: the melody of heaven floats along the air, and thrills through the soul of the dying believer: angels wait to "minister to the heirs of salvation;" Jesus, the friend of sinners, is present to close the dim and fixed eyes: an energy more than mortal is vouchsafed; and death is swallowed up in victory!

It is no longer a matter of inquiry and of uncertainty, of conjecture and of hope, that the soul is immortal: the die is cast, and the fact is indisputably proved. "Life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel." A thousand dying testimonies have proved the stability of revealed truth. He who emerged from the dark dominions of death, as the forerunner of his people, spoiled him of his sceptre, and bore away the keys of his prison in triumph to heaven. The throne of the king of terrors already trembles, and nods to its fall. "The hour is coming when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth." His empire shall be depopu-

lated, his captives set free, his very being annihilated. Rejoice, O ye heavens, for the King of Kings has vanquished the Power which clouded your beauties, and which will extinguish the radiance of your orbs! Rejoice, for the Savior shall reign till all enemies are subdued under his feet; and "the last enemy that shall be destroyed, is death!" Rejoice, for he will create you anew, and rekindle all your faded glories, with a lustre which shall never be impaired! Shout for joy, ye redeemed, for the day of the restitution of all things draweth nigh!—Hear it, ye nations, and let the voice of triumph thunder through all your islands and all your continents! Hear it, ye angels, and strike your harps in sympathy with the sons of mortality, the fellow-heirs with you of the same kingdom; and aid their feeble voices, by adding the melody of your songs to their triumph over death! Hear it, ye spirits, of just men made perfect, and blend your joys with the gratitude of your brethren according to the flesh! Sound the trumpet of victory through the dreary chambers of the grave—the long-silent habitations of the dead; and while the unconscious dust lies sleeping in these low and mournful vaults, hail, in your invisible world, ye glorified saints, the dawn of that approaching morning, when your ashes shall be ransomed from the tomb, and time and death shall expire together!

It is also decided that a two fold portion awaits the departed spirit, a world of endless joy, or of endless woe. A prison where the heart hardens as it suffers; and the vials of divine wrath cannot be exhausted: or a world of bliss, the habitation of God, of angels, of departed saints, of holiness, of perfection, of inextinguishable happiness. In the scriptures, the imagin-

ation and the reason are employed in contemplating regions of horror, in which the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched; but the man who rejected divine compassion is delivered over to remorse, and anguish, and darkness, and despair, and unknown misery: or, these powers of the mind are overwhelmed in the vision of the palace of God, and the unshaken kingdom which he has prepared for the righteous; and as the armies of the redeemed pass before us, the voice from heaven proclaims—"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them to living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

When you have explored these invisible worlds by the aid of revelation, much obscurity still hovers over them. Their existence is clearly ascertained, but few particulars respecting these unknown lands, have reached these remote regions. We have yet every thing to learn respecting their nature, the nature of their inhabitants, and the nature of the employments attached to them. "Lo, these are *parts* of his ways! but how little a portion is heard of him?" And if *all* the operations of nature, the mysteries of Providence, and the secrets of the invisible worlds, were developed, still *these all* are but "*parts* of his ways!" We apply this language once more,

#### IV. TO THE WORD OF REVELATION.

Even in this volume "how little a portion is heard of him!"

Here, those truths which are of most importance to us as dying men, are plainly revealed. We feel forei-

bly our relation to God, "the Judge of all." We behold human nature emerging from the ruins of the fall, and triumphing over the curse. We perceive the devastation introduced by the transgression of our first parent, repaired by the obedience and death of the Second Adam, who "is the Lord from heaven." We see Jesus "made a little lower than the angels" for our sakes, afterwards "crowned with glory and honor," as our surety and representative. He suffered "the just for the unjust to bring us to God." He was "lifted up that he might draw all men unto him." And "through him we all have access by one Spirit to the Father."

The Holy Spirit is represented as descending to apply all the blessings arising from his death to the wounded conscience. The image of God is restored to the heart. The bosom becomes an habitation of the Most High. It is no longer a scene of anarchy, the seat of tumultuous passions; but the residence of peace, and joy, and hope, and holiness, as the pledge of still more refined and exalted felicity to come.

Connected with these solemn truths are promises suited to every possible circumstance in human life, and adapted to all the difficulties which press upon the man in passing through this valley of tears. In this one book is found "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report:" in a word, whatsoever things are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness." But when you have laid together all the discoveries of this volume, you must confess—"Lo, these are parts of his ways! but how little a portion is heard of him?"

It is freely conceded to infidelity, that there are in this volume "many things hard to be understood;" difficulties which cannot be surmounted, and mysteries which cannot be explained. But who does not perceive, from the train of discussion pursued this evening, that in this very point consists its analogy to nature and to Providence? that it bears the character of the unsearchable God impressed upon it? that it forms a part, and only a part, of the same mysterious plan, and the same great operations, which are carrying forwards above us, around us, beneath us, wherever the hand of God is—and that is every where? Who does not trace in the Bible the same features of clearness and of obscurity—the same combination of light and of darkness—found in every thing else connected with the Deity; and to be expected in the communications made by an infinite mind, to a finite capacity? Who does not see that the same obscurity which overshadows revelation, equally overspreads nature and Providence? Who can deny, on these principles, the position which we wish to establish: that no conclusion can be drawn against the Bible on account of its mysteries; but rather, that they furnish an evidence that it is indeed a revelation from him, who is equally past finding out in all his ways?

All these things are but the image of the invisible God: when you have passed through them all, you are only on the threshold of the temple of his works. He that wearies his eye in tracing the systems that are visible in the starry heavens, and his imagination in conceiving of myriads beyond these, leaves half the works of God unexplored, and an infinity of systems unconceived. He that searches into the mystery of Providence, and by the aid of revelation unravels a

portion of his operations, has only seen, like Moses, a part of his glory, but "the cloud" is yet spread over "the face of his throne." He that explores the invisible worlds by the light of revelation, only sweeps over their surface, but must die to learn their secrets. He that reads in this volume the nature of God, his relation to us, the way of reconciliation, and the plan of redemption, has learned only in part what God has done, and what he has laid up for them that fear him. The tale will be unfolding through all the revolving periods of eternity. Some mysteries will be incessantly explaining, some new discoveries of divine grace continually making—and we shall ever be learning what are "the heights and depths, the breadths and lengths, of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." For the present we leave the subject exhausted precisely at the point where we began: "Lo, these are parts of his ways! and how little a portion is heard of him?"

"BUT THE THUNDER OF HIS POWER WHO CAN UNDER-  
STAND."

If the radiance of these material orbs is so insupportable, and the light of the noontide sun blinds the organs of vision: if the mysteries of providence are so inscrutable, and his superintendence of human affairs so irresistible: if the invisible worlds are so sublimely obscure, and he reigns unresisted over them: if the beams of his mercy shining through the revelation of divine love are so overwhelming; Oh! what must be the unquenchable fire of his indignation! "The thunder of his power who can understand?"

If when he descended in the cool of the day to judge our first parents, they shrunk with horror from

the face of offended Deity: if when he gave his law, the mountain burned with fire, and darkness and thunder, and the sound of a trumpet, announced the present God, and shook the camp of Israel: if when he discovered only the skirts of his glory to Moses, he sheltered him in a rock, and covered him with his hand; if when he passed before Elijah, a great and strong wind rent the mountains, an earthquake rived the rocks, and a fire consumed the forest; if when in the veil of flesh his face eclipsed the splendor of the sun, and his raiment shone as the light; if when he appeared to his beloved disciple in the barren isle of Patmos, in the softest beams of his majesty, so terrible was the sight, that he fell at his feet as dead: Oh! what must be the power of his anger! and "the thunder of his power who can understand?"

We have heard this thunderstorm in the summer: when clouds have been opposed to clouds, and mingled their sulphur in one loud, impetuous explosion; while the mountains and the vallies have returned their roarings in broken echoes. But what is the thunderstorm of summer, to the ten thousand thunders which shall rend the earth, when the trump of God shall awaken the dead; and add to these twice ten thousand more, and they are as the rattling of a leaf to "the thunder of his power!"

Who then can stand against him? Pause and think, ye monarchs of this world, who resist his power! Who would have him for an enemy? Pause and think, ye who madly violate his laws! Who may abide the day of his coming? For he shall sit as a refiner to try every work, and every spirit what it is!

Hide your diminished heads, ye that would bring down the Infinite Mind to your finite capacities! Boast

no more more your conclusions drawn from the limited views which you have of his operations. Use your reason no longer as a weapon against him who bestowed it; lest a dart, launched by an unseen hand, strike through your heart; and the arrows of the Almighty be lodged in your bosom, the poison whereof shall drink up your spirit! "Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way; when his wrath is kindled but a little!"——"BUT THE THUNDER OF HIS POWER WHO CAN UNDERSTAND?"

The first of these is the fact that the...  
the second is the fact that the...  
the third is the fact that the...  
the fourth is the fact that the...  
the fifth is the fact that the...  
the sixth is the fact that the...  
the seventh is the fact that the...  
the eighth is the fact that the...  
the ninth is the fact that the...  
the tenth is the fact that the...  
the eleventh is the fact that the...  
the twelfth is the fact that the...  
the thirteenth is the fact that the...  
the fourteenth is the fact that the...  
the fifteenth is the fact that the...  
the sixteenth is the fact that the...  
the seventeenth is the fact that the...  
the eighteenth is the fact that the...  
the nineteenth is the fact that the...  
the twentieth is the fact that the...  
the twenty-first is the fact that the...  
the twenty-second is the fact that the...  
the twenty-third is the fact that the...  
the twenty-fourth is the fact that the...  
the twenty-fifth is the fact that the...  
the twenty-sixth is the fact that the...  
the twenty-seventh is the fact that the...  
the twenty-eighth is the fact that the...  
the twenty-ninth is the fact that the...  
the thirtieth is the fact that the...  
the thirty-first is the fact that the...  
the thirty-second is the fact that the...  
the thirty-third is the fact that the...  
the thirty-fourth is the fact that the...  
the thirty-fifth is the fact that the...  
the thirty-sixth is the fact that the...  
the thirty-seventh is the fact that the...  
the thirty-eighth is the fact that the...  
the thirty-ninth is the fact that the...  
the fortieth is the fact that the...  
the forty-first is the fact that the...  
the forty-second is the fact that the...  
the forty-third is the fact that the...  
the forty-fourth is the fact that the...  
the forty-fifth is the fact that the...  
the forty-sixth is the fact that the...  
the forty-seventh is the fact that the...  
the forty-eighth is the fact that the...  
the forty-ninth is the fact that the...  
the fiftieth is the fact that the...  
the fifty-first is the fact that the...  
the fifty-second is the fact that the...  
the fifty-third is the fact that the...  
the fifty-fourth is the fact that the...  
the fifty-fifth is the fact that the...  
the fifty-sixth is the fact that the...  
the fifty-seventh is the fact that the...  
the fifty-eighth is the fact that the...  
the fifty-ninth is the fact that the...  
the sixtieth is the fact that the...  
the sixty-first is the fact that the...  
the sixty-second is the fact that the...  
the sixty-third is the fact that the...  
the sixty-fourth is the fact that the...  
the sixty-fifth is the fact that the...  
the sixty-sixth is the fact that the...  
the sixty-seventh is the fact that the...  
the sixty-eighth is the fact that the...  
the sixty-ninth is the fact that the...  
the seventieth is the fact that the...  
the seventy-first is the fact that the...  
the seventy-second is the fact that the...  
the seventy-third is the fact that the...  
the seventy-fourth is the fact that the...  
the seventy-fifth is the fact that the...  
the seventy-sixth is the fact that the...  
the seventy-seventh is the fact that the...  
the seventy-eighth is the fact that the...  
the seventy-ninth is the fact that the...  
the eightieth is the fact that the...  
the eighty-first is the fact that the...  
the eighty-second is the fact that the...  
the eighty-third is the fact that the...  
the eighty-fourth is the fact that the...  
the eighty-fifth is the fact that the...  
the eighty-sixth is the fact that the...  
the eighty-seventh is the fact that the...  
the eighty-eighth is the fact that the...  
the eighty-ninth is the fact that the...  
the ninetieth is the fact that the...  
the ninety-first is the fact that the...  
the ninety-second is the fact that the...  
the ninety-third is the fact that the...  
the ninety-fourth is the fact that the...  
the ninety-fifth is the fact that the...  
the ninety-sixth is the fact that the...  
the ninety-seventh is the fact that the...  
the ninety-eighth is the fact that the...  
the ninety-ninth is the fact that the...  
the hundredth is the fact that the...

# NOTES.

## LECTURE I.

NOTE 1.—It would not be difficult to enlarge the catalogue of idols, enumerated in the pages of the preceding Lecture, and to assign the different causes of their deification: but to unfold their character, which in that case it would be necessary to do, would be an ungracious task to the writer, and would afford no pleasure to the reader. Our immortal poet has given an ample list of the objects of heathen adoration, under their scriptural names; which will be more familiar to the Bible reader; and while he has veiled their actions in modest language, he has adorned the sad catalogue, so far as it is possible to ornament a barren list, with the nervous eloquence of his majestic versification. An abbreviation of his recital is extracted.

“Say, Muse, their names *then* known, who first, who last  
Rous’d from the slumber, on that fiery couch,  
At their great emperor’s call, as next in worth  
Came singly where he stood on the bare strand,  
While the promiscuous crowd stood yet aloof.”

---

“First MOLOCH,\* horrid king, besmear’d with blood  
Of human sacrifice, and parents’ tears;  
Though for the noise of drums and timbrels loud,  
Their children’s cries unheard, that pass’d through fire  
To his grim idol. Him the Ammonite  
Worshipp’d in Rabba and her watery plain,  
In Argob and in Basan, to the stream  
Of utmost Arnon.”

---

“Next CHEMOS, th’ obscene dread of Moab’s sons  
From Aroar to Nabo, and the wild  
Of southmost Abarim; in Hesebon

\* It is not easy to determine to which of the heathen deities these Hebrew names apply. *Saturn*, probably, for his rites are nearly the same.

And Horonaim, Seon's realm, beyond  
 The flowery dale of Sibma, clad with vines,  
 And Eleale to th' Asphaltic pool.  
 PEOR, his other name, when he entic'd  
 Israel in Sittim."—————

—————  
 With these came they who from the bordering flood  
 Of old Euphrates to the brook that parts  
 Egypt from Syrian ground, had general names  
 Of BAALIM and ASHTAROTH; those male,  
 These feminine.!"—————

—————"With these in troop  
 Came Astoreth, whom the Phenicians call'd  
 ASTARTE,\* queen of heaven, with crescent horns;  
 To whose bright image nightly, by the moon,  
 Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs."

—————"THAMUZ† came next behind,  
 Whose annual wound in Lebanon allur'd  
 The Syrian damsels to lament his fate  
 In amorous ditties all a summer's day."

—————"Next came one  
 Who mourn'd in earnest, when the captive ark  
 Maim'd his brute image—————  
 DAGON‡ his name, sea-monster, upward man  
 And downward fish:—————  
 —————dreaded through the coast  
 Of Palestine."—————

Him follow'd RIMMON, whose delightful seat  
 "Was fair Damascus."—————

—————"After these, appear'd  
 A crew, who, under names of old renown,  
 OSIRIS, ISIS, ORUS, and their train,  
 With monstrous shapes and sorceries abus'd  
 Fanatic Egypt and her priests, to seek  
 Their wandering gods, disguis'd in brutish forms

\*Called also *Luna, Diana, Hecate.*  
 ‡Probably *Neptune.*

†*Adonis.*

Rather than human. Nor did Israel 'scape  
 Th' infection, when their borrow'd gold compos'd  
 The calf in Oreb; and the rebel king  
 Doubled that sin in Bethel and in Dan."

— — — — —  
 "The rest were long to tell, though far renown'd;  
 Th' Ionian gods, of Javan's issue held  
 Gods, yet confess'd later than heav'n and earth,  
 Their boasted parents: TITAN, heav'n's first-born,  
 With his enormous brood, and birth-right, seiz'd  
 By younger SATURN; he from mightier Jove,  
 His own and RHEA's son, like measure found;  
 So Jove usurping reign'd: these first in Crete  
 And Ida known, thence on the snowy top  
 Of cold Olympus rul'd the middle air,  
 Their highest heaven; or on the Delphian\* cliff,  
 Or in Dodona, and through all the bounds  
 Of Doric land; or who with SATURN old,  
 Fled over Adria to the Hesperian fields,  
 And o'er the Celtic roam'd the utmost Isles."

*Milton's Paradise Lost, Book I. l. 376--521.*

NOTE 2.—The custom of the Carthaginians of consuming children in honor of Saturn.

Diodorus Siculus had been saying, that as the enemy approached the city, the Carthaginians imagined that they had offended Saturn by restraining their human sacrifices: he adds, "therefore that they might correct their errors without delay, they immolated in public sacrifice two hundred chosen boys of their principal nobility." And he thus describes the idol Saturn: "For there was with them a brazen statue of Saturn, which held its extended arms so inclined towards the earth, that the child when placed upon it rolled off, and plunged into a furnace full of fire."

*Diod. Sic. Lib. xx.*

Justin speaks of the same cruel superstition, thus: "They immolated men as victims, and children, whose tender years excited the pity even of enemies, they placed upon their altars, purchasing peace of the gods by the blood of those for whose life they were accustomed principally to implore the gods."

*Just. His. Lib. xviii. cap. 6.*

\*The Oracle of Apollo.

This horrible custom is mentioned also by Herodotus, Lib.vii. The English reader may consult ROLLIN's Ancient History vol. i, p. 273.

NOTE 3.—These are the meiancholy sentiments which Homer puts into the mouth of the shade of Achilles:

“Talk not of ruling in this dol’rous gloom,  
Nor think vain words (he cry’d) can ease my doom.  
Rather I choose laboriously to bear  
A weight of woes, and breathe the vital air,  
A slave to some poor hind that toils for bread,  
Than reign the sceptred monarch of the dead!”

*Pope's Odyss.* Book xi, l. 595—600.

NOTE 4.—Socrates is represented by Plato as thus expressing his expectations of a legislator qualified to reveal the mind of Deity to the human race: “that it is necessary to wait till such a personage shall appear to teach them how they ought to conduct themselves, both towards God, and towards man.” He goes on to exclaim with fervor—“(O) when shall that period arrive! And who shall be that teacher? How ardently do I desire to see this man, who he is! *Alcibiad.* II. *de Precat.*

In reference to the same personage he says, that this Legislator must be of higher than human extraction: for that as beasts are governed by men, must man be guided by a nature superior to his own. *De Leg.* lib. 4.

## LECTURE II.

NOTE 3.—Among the ancient philosophers, various modifications of the hypothesis which supposes the eternity of the world, are to be found.

Ocellus Lucanus, who lived a short time before Plato, was one of the most ancient asserters of the world's eternity. A short treatise, bearing his name, yet remains, upon this subject: *Ocell. Lucan. de Univ.* p. 506. inter opusc. mythol. edit. per T. Gale, 1688. The arguments which he produces will not be considered as the most decisive and satisfactory that could be wished: for he asserts, that the world must be eternal, because its figure and motion are circular; and because it is impossible for any thing to arise out of nothing, or to fall again into nothing.

Aristotle maintained, that not only the world, but that mankind, and all species of animals, have existed from eternity, without any original production; and that the earth, with all its variations, and in all its parts, has ever been what it now is.

The later Platonists deduce their principal arguments in favor of the eternity of the world, from the eternity of God's decree for its creation, "and the indivisibility of the real duration of God." They maintain that God always existed; that his decree was eternal; and that there could not be a time in which it did not exist in the Divine mind. Be it so: there remains still much perplexity in their reasoning; and, as it appears to me, much sophism in their deductions. There must be a difference between *ideal* (if the expression be lawful) and *actual* creation; and I do not see how it can be proved, that the *decree* was not anterior to the *accomplishment* of that decree.

Xenophanes and his followers supposed, that God and the world were one and the same thing; and of course held its eternity and immutability. This, again, has been denied by others: but there is so much obscurity in the statement which these philosophers have made of their own opinions, that if they did not mean this, it is difficult to decide what hypothesis they did intend to convey.

Of one or the other of these opinions respecting the eternity of the world, appear to have been Strato, of Lampsacus, and Alexander the Epicurean, the contemporary of Plutarch.

Others supposed the *matter* of the world to be eternal, but not the *form* of it. These, in fact, held the eternity of the chaos, to which they attributed a certain motion arising from the action and reaction of the first four qualities, producing the earth by mere fortuitous fluctuations; and thus, this hypothesis resolves itself into the preceding one, viz. that the world itself was produced by chance.

The reader who may wish to see a larger and more laborious statement of these several hypotheses, and others, not brought forward in this note, will find a full and satisfactory discussion of them in Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. i, p. 77—91; title, The Cosmogony. But in some later 8vo. editions, these statements are transferred to vol. xviii, Appendix, p. 114—126.



NOTE 4. Extracted from Ovid.

TRANSLATION BY DRYDEN.

“Before the seas, and this terrestrial ball,  
 And heav’n’s high canopy, that covers all,  
 One was the face of nature; if a face,  
 Rather a rude and indigested mass:  
 A lifeless lump, unfashion’d, and unfram’d,  
 Of jarring seeds; and justly Chaos nam’d.  
 No sun was lighted up, the world to view;  
 No moon did yet her blunted horns renew;  
 Nor yet was earth suspended in the sky;  
 Nor pois’d, did on her own foundations lie:  
 Nor seas about the shores their arms had thrown;  
 But earth, and air, and water were in one.  
 Thus, air was void of light, and earth unstable,  
 And waters dark abyss unnavigable.  
 No certain form on any was imprest;  
 All were confus’d, and each disturb’d the rest.  
 For hot and cold, were in one body fixt;  
 And soft with hard, and light with heavy mixt.

“But God, or Nature, while they thus contend,  
 To these intestine discords puts an end;  
 Then earth from air, and seas from earth were driven,  
 And grosser air sunk from ethereal heaven.  
 Thus, disembroil’d, they take their proper place;  
 The next of kin, contiguously embrace;  
 And fœs are sunder’d, by a larger space. }  
 The force of fire ascended first on high,  
 And took its dwelling in the vaulted sky:  
 Then air succeeds, in lightness next to fire;  
 Whose atoms from unactive earth retire.  
 Earth sinks beneath, and draws a num’rous throng  
 Of pond’rous, thick, unwieldy seeds along.  
 About her coasts, unruly waters roar;  
 And, rising on a ridge, insult the shore.

“Thus when the God, whatever God was he,  
 Had form’d the whole, and made the parts agree,  
 That no unequal portions might be found,  
 He moulded earth into a spacious round:

Then with a breath he gave the winds to blow:  
 And bade the congregated waters flow.  
 He adds the running springs, and standing lakes;  
 And bounding banks for winding rivers makes.  
 Some part in earth are swallow'd up, the most  
 In ample oceans disembogu'd, are lost.  
 He shades the woods, the vallies he restrains  
 With rocky mountains, and extends the plains.

"And as five zones th' etherial regions bind,  
 Five correspondent, are to earth assign'd:  
 The sun with rays, directly darting down,  
 Fires all beneath, and fries the middle zone:  
 The two beneath the distant poles, complain  
 Of endless winter, and perpetual rain.  
 Betwixt th' extremes, two happier climates hold  
 The temper that partakes of hot, and cold.  
 The fields of liquid air, inclosing all,  
 Surround the compass of this earthly ball:  
 The lighter parts lie next the fires above;  
 The grosser near the wat'ry surface move:  
 Thick clouds are spread, and storms engender there,  
 And thunder's voice, which wretched mortals fear,  
 And winds that on their wings cold winter bear.  
 Nor were these blust'ring brethren left at large,  
 On seas, and shores, their fury to discharge:  
 Bound as they are, and circumscrib'd in place,  
 They rend the world, resistless as they pass;  
 And mighty marks of mischief leave behind;  
 Such is the rage of their tempestuous kind.

"First, Eurus to the rising morn is sent,  
 (The regions of the balmy continent;)  
 And eastern realms, where early Persians run,  
 To greet the blest appearance of the sun.  
 Westward the wanton Zephyr wings his flight;  
 Pleas'd with the remnants of departing light.  
 Fierce Boreas, with his offspring, issues forth  
 T' invade the frozen waggon of the north;  
 While frowning Auster seeks the southern sphere,  
 And rots, with endless rain, th' unwholesome year.

"High o'er the clouds, and empty realms of wind,  
The God a clearer space for heaven design'd;  
Where fields of light and liquid æther flow,  
Purg'd from the pond'rous dregs of earth below.

"Scarce had the Power distinguish'd these, when straight,  
The stars, no longer overlaid with weight,  
Exert their heads, from underneath the mass;  
And upward shoot, and kindle as they pass,  
And with diffusive light adorn their heavenly place. }  
Then, every void of nature to supply,  
With forms of gods he fills the vacant sky:  
New herds of beasts, he sends the plains to share:  
New colonies of birds to people air: }  
And to their oozy beds, the finny fish repair.

"A creature of a more exalted kind  
Was wanting yet, and then was man design'd:  
Conscious of thought, of more capacious breast,  
For empire form'd, and fit to rule the rest:  
Whether with particles of heavenly fire  
The God of nature did his soul inspire,  
Or earth, but new divided from the sky,  
And pliant, still retain'd th' ethereal energy:  
Which wise Prometheus\* temper'd into paste,  
And mix'd with living streams the godlike image cast.  
Thus, while the mute creation downward bend  
Their sight, and to their earthly mother tend,  
Man looks aloft; and with erected eyes  
Beholds his own hereditary skies.  
From such rude principles our form began;  
And earth was metamorphos'd into man."

*Garth's Ovid*, vol. i, p. 5—9.

NOTE 5.—Testimony to the majesty of the scriptures from Longinus in his treatise on the sublime. He had been saying that, "those who speak of God, ought to be careful to represent him as great, and pure, and without alloy." He adds, "Thus

\* "Japetus"—or Japhet.

the legislator of the Jews, a man of no common genius, conceived and spake justly of the power of Deity, when in the very beginning of his laws, he writes—"God said," (said he) What? "Be light, and it was: Be earth, and it was so."

*Dion. Long. de Sublim.* Sec. ix, p. 50, Pearce's Edit.

Longinus lived in the time of Aurelian the emperor, and was a favorite of Zenobia, queen of the Palmyrians. His treatise "on the sublime," from which the above extract is taken, is, in itself, a master-piece of eloquence.

### LECTURE III.

NOTE 1.—For the enumeration of ancient testimonies, to human longevity, by Josephus.

See *Joseph Antiq. Jud.* lib. I, cap. 3, vol. i, Hudson's edit.

I cannot find any passage in Hesiod directly specifying the years of the first men: but he gives a beautiful description of the golden age, and its influence in the prolongation of human life in *Dieb. et Oper.* v. 130, et seq. Hudson supposes, in his note upon this passage in Josephus, that *Ἡσιόδου* might be written for *Ἰσιδώρου*: "intelligendo *Isidorum Characenum*; qui (ut constat ex *Luciano de Macrobiis*) in *Historia sua* attulit exempla regum longævorum." He says, however, that it is uniformly written *Ἡσιόδου* in all the Greek manuscripts: but in the Latin, variously, *Isiodus*, *Esiodus*, *Isiodorus*, and *Isidorus*.

NOTE 2.—Testimony of Catullus to the infamy of the old world.

"But when the earth became stained with nameless wickedness, and divers lusts banished integrity from the mind; then, a brother's hand shed fraternal blood---the son ceased to deplore his deceased parents---the father desired the funeral of his first born---the son to enjoy his unmarried step-mother---the impious mother yielding to her thoughtless offspring, feared not to pollute the temple of the Gods: all things, just and unjust, were thus blended together by furious passion; and the propitious mind of the Gods turned away from us." *Catul. Epith. Pel. et Thet.* Can there be a more striking confirmation of the apos-

tle's assertion, respecting the heathen world, that "they were given over to a reprobate mind?" or a better comment upon the declaration of Moses, that "the earth was filled with violence?"

NOTE 6.—Extract, from Dr. Geddes, respecting the quantity of water required for an universal deluge; and the sources whence it might be supposed to be derived.

*"Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.* This has been always accounted one of the most unaccountable phenomena of the deluge, and has, more than any other circumstance attending it, perplexed and puzzled, commentators. The most ingenious solution of the difficulty which I have ever met with, is one sent to me, some years ago, by Sir Henry Englefield, which I shall here give in his own words:

'The diameter of the earth being taken at 8000 miles; and the highest mountain being supposed four miles high above the level of the sea,\* the quantity of water requisite to cover them will be an hollow sphere of 8008 miles diameter, and four miles thick; the content of which, in round numbers, is 800,000,000 cubic miles.—Let us now suppose the globe of the earth to consist of a crust of solid matter, 1000 miles thick, enclosing a sea, or body of water, 2000 miles deep; within which is a central nucleus of 2000 miles in diameter: the content of that body of water will be 109,200,000,000 cubic miles; or about 137 times the quantity of water required to cover the surface of the earth as above stated. Now water, by experiment, expands about one 25th of its whole magnitude, from freezing to boiling, or one hundredth of its magnitude for 45 degrees of Fahrenheit's thermometer. Suppose, then, that the heat of the globe, previously to the deluge, was about 50 degrees of Fahrenheit's, a temperature very near that of this climate; and that a sudden change took place in the interior of the globe, which raised its height to 83 degrees; an heat no greater than the marine animals live in, in the shallow seas between the tropics; those 23 degrees of augmented heat would so expand the internal sea, as to cause it to more than cover the surface of the globe, according to the

\* "This is more than the height of the Andes."

conditions above mentioned: and if the cause of heat ceased, the waters would of course, in cooling, retire into their proper places.—If the central nucleus be supposed 3000 miles, and the internal sea only 1500 miles deep, its contents will then be 99,200,000,000 cubic miles; or, 125 times the water required. and in that case, an additional heat of 36 degrees to the previous temperature of the earth, will be sufficient to produce the above described effect.—It is scarce necessary to say, that the perfect regularity here supposed to exist in the form of the interior parts of the globe, is of no consequence to the proposed hypothesis; which will be equally just, if the above given quantity of waters be any how disposed within the earth.—Neither is it here proposed to discuss the reality of a central fire, which many philosophers maintain, and many deny. It may not be unworthy to remark, that the above hypothesis, which does not in any way contradict any law of nature, does singularly accord with the Mosaic narrative of the deluge: for the sudden expansion of the internal waters would, of course, force them up through the chasms of the exterior crust. in dreadful jets and torrents; while their heat would cause such vapors to ascend into the atmosphere, as, when condensed; would produce torrents of rain beyond our conception.’

“The possibility of an universal deluge, then; of a deluge, rising *fifteen cubits above the highest mountains*, can hardly be denied. It is not at all necessary to suppose, with Sir Henry, that the antediluvian mountains were as high as those of the present earth. They may have been of a very different form and size, and composed of other materials.”

*Dr. Geddes, vol. 2, Crit. Rem. on Gen. vii, 20, &c.*

After all, this great critic, as usual, labors, to lower the Mosaic account; and thinks “that a great deal of the fabulous is mixed with the history of Noah’s flood.” The humble opinion of the writer of these Lectures, differs widely from him, in this respect; and he is satisfied with taking this ingenious hypothesis, which *even* Dr. Geddes admits, proves such a deluge *possible*, without accepting his concluding observations.

NOTE 7.—Experiment by the Bishop of Landaff, on the quantity of water exhaled from the earth on a summer’s day.

Who would have conjectured, that an acre of ground, even after having been parched by the heat of the sun in summer, dispersed into the air, above 1600 gallons of water, in the space of twelve of the hottest hours of the day? No vapor is seen to ascend; and we little suppose, that in the hottest part of the day, it more usually does ascend than in any other. The experiment from which I draw this conclusion, is so easy to be made, that every one may satisfy himself the truth of it. On the 2d day of June, 1779, when the sun shone bright and hot, I put a large drinking glass, with its mouth downwards, upon a grass-plot which was mown close; there had been no rain for above a month, and the grass was become brown: in less than two minutes, the inside of the glass was clouded with a vapor, and in half an hour, drops of water began to trickle down its inside, in various places. This experiment was repeated several times with the same success.

That I might accurately estimate the quantity, thus raised, in a certain portion of time, I measured the area of the mouth of the glass, and found it to be twenty square inches: there are 1296 square inches in a yard, and 4840 square yards in a statute acre; hence, if we can find the means of measuring the quantity of vapor raised from twenty square inches of earth, suppose in one quarter of an hour, it will be an easy matter to calculate the quantity which would be raised, with the same-degree of heat, from an acre in twelve hours. The method I took to measure the quantity of vapor, was not, perhaps, the most accurate which might be thought of, but it was simple and easy to be practised: when the glass had stood on the grass-plot one quarter of an hour, and had collected a quantity of vapor, I wiped its inside with a piece of muslin, the weight of which had been previously taken; as soon as the glass was wiped dry, the muslin was weighed again, its increase of weight shewed the quantity of vapor which had been collected. The medium increase of weight, from several experiments made on the same day, between twelve and three o'clock, was six grains, collected in one quarter of an hour, from twenty square inches of earth. If the reader takes the trouble to make the calculation, he will find, that above 1600 gallons reckoning eight pints to a gallon, and estimating the weight of a pint of water at one pound avoirdupois, or 7000 grains Troy-weight, would be raised at the

rate here mentioned, from an acre of ground in twenty-four hours.

"It may easily be conceived, that the quantity thus elevated, will be greater when the ground has been well soaked with rain, provided the heat be the same. I did not happen to mark the heat of the ground, when I made the fore-mentioned experiments. The two following, are more circumstantial: the ground had been wetted, the day before I made them, by a thunder-shower; the heat of the earth, at the time of making them, estimated by a thermometer laid upon the grass, was ninety-six degrees; one experiment gave 1973 gallons from an acre in twelve hours; the other gave 1905. Another experiment made when there had been no rain for a week, and the heat of the earth was one hundred and ten degrees, gave after the rate of 2800 gallons from an acre in twelve hours. The earth was hotter, than the air, as it was exposed to the reflection of the sun's rays from a brick wall."

*Watson's Chemical Essays, vol. 3, p. 52—56.*

## LECTURE IV.

NOTE 2.—The giant's war described by different ancient poets.

*See Hom. Odys. xi.*

Proud of their strength, and more than mortal size,  
The gods they challenge, and affect the skies,  
Heav'd on Olympus, tott'ring Ossa stood,  
On Ossa, Pelion nods with all his wood.

*Pope's Hom. Odys. b. xi, l. 385—388.*

*Also Virg. Georg. lib. i, v. 279—283.*

—————And cruel Typhoeus, and the brethren, leagued to  
scale heaven. Thrice, indeed, they attempted to pile Ossa upon  
Pelion,\* and to roll woody Olympus† upon Ossa: thrice the Father  
of heaven overthrew the mountains, thus heaped up with  
thunder.

*Also Ovid Met. fab. vi, lib. iv, 151—155.*

\* Two high mountains in Thessaly.

† An hill between Thessaly and Macedon, so high, that the heathen poets usually apply its name to heaven.

Nor were the gods themselves more safe above,  
 Against beleaguer'd heav'n the giants move:  
 Hills pil'd on hills, on mountains, mountains lie,  
 To make their *mad approaches to the sky*.  
 Till Jove, no longer patient, took his time  
 T'avenge, with thunder, their audacious crime;  
 Red light'ning play'd along the firmament,  
 And their demolish'd works to pieces rent. DRYDEN.

*Garth's Ovid, b. i, l. 193, &c.*

NOTE 3. See page 123, Joseph. quotation from one of the Sybils.

NOTE 4.—Testimony of Abydenus, preserved by Eusebius;

EX ABYDENO. *Euseb. Præp. ix, c. 14.*

Translated in page 124.

NOTE 5.—Remark of Grotius respecting the building of Babylon: “Falso autem a Græsis proditum, conditam a Semiramide Babylonem, etiam Berosus in Chaldaicis prodidit, ut nos Josephus docet contra Appionem, primo: eundemque errorem tum ex Philone Biblio, tum ex Dorotheo Sidonio refellit Julius Firmicus. Vide et quæ de gigantibus a turri ex Eupolemo nobis adducit Eusebius Præparat. Evangelicæ lib. xx, cap. 17.”

*Grot. de Relig. Christ. § xvi, in not. 63.*

## LECTURE V.

NOTE 1.—Testimony to the fact that the Chaldeans worshipped fire, extracted from the works of the pious and eloquent Saurin.

*Saur. Dics. sur la Bible, Tome I. disc. xi. p. 78.*

“There is a remarkable passage in Rufin respecting the idolatry of the Chaldeans: the testimony of this author is confirmed by that of Suidas:

“They say that the Chaldeans formerly carried fire, which was their God, through all the provinces, to contend with all the other divinities, that whoever conquered in this combat might be deemed the true one. The deities of air, of gold, of

silver, of wood, and of stone, were easily consumed by the fire, which had the superiority over all. A priest of Canopus bethought himself of this stratagem. The Egyptians had certain vases of earth, which had little apertures on all sides, and which were designed to filtrate the water of the Nile. He filled one of these vases with water: he closed all the holes of it with wax: he placed a head upon it; which was said to be that of Menelaus, and he exalted it to a divinity. The Chaldeans kindled the fire round this vase, that these two deities might contend together. But the fire having quickly melted the wax which covered the aperture of the pitcher, it was presently extinguished by the water which issued from it, and the priest of Canopus obtained the victory."

"These are the words of Rufin."

NOTE 2.—There is a singular coincidence between the language used by the Deity, in his conference with Abraham, and the words which Ovid puts into the mouth of his Jupiter. In the one case, it is to be considered altogether as a figure of speech, for the Deity could obtain no additional information, by descending in a human form: in the latter instance, the poet speaks in exact conformity to the ideas which the heathens entertained of the limited knowledge of their divinities. We will lay the passages together.

#### MOSES.

"And the LORD said, Because the *cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great*, and because their *sin is very greivous*; I will go down now, and see whether they have done *altogether* according to the *cry* of it, which *is come unto me*; and if not, I will know."

*Gen. xviii, 20, 21.*

"The INFAMY of the times had REACHED OUR EARS: WISHING it might be FALSE, I DESCENDED from high OLYMPUS, and, a god, I passed through the earth UNDER A HUMAN FORM."

NOTE 3.—The several testimonies collected from different ancient writers, respecting the lake Asphaltites and its vicinity, with the traditions of its destruction by fire are translated in page 155.

*Ovid Met. lib. i, 211—213.*

Many travellers bear a testimony to the unhealthiness of the air about the lake: the monks who live in the neighborhood, would have dissuaded Dr. Pococke from bathing in these singular waters: he ventured in, however, and was, two days after, seized with a dizziness, and violent pain in the stomach, which lasted nearly three weeks, and which they imputed to his rashness; nor does he contradict them.

NOTE 4.—The day of judgment is a doctrine of Christianity: yet is it worthy remark, that the heathens cherished some vague opinions, and held some uncertain traditions, that the earth, and the orbs around us, are to be consumed by fire, as the following extracts will prove.

When fate commands the final hour,  
And conquering Time's resistless power  
Dissolves creation's frame;  
Stars mix'd with stars shall vainly try,  
In ocean's boundless waves, to fly  
The universal flame.

The land no more shall guard the sea,  
The moon shall strive to rule the day,  
The shatter'd sphere shall burn:  
The whole machine to ruin hurl'd,  
Discord shall triumph o'er the world,  
And chaos shall return.

*Lucan. Phras. lib. i. v. 72—80.*

Stars shall rush upon stars, every thing material shall be consumed; and whatever now shines in order, shall perish in one common fire!

*Seneca, fine ad Marciam.*

Ovid represents his Jupiter, when resolved to punish the earth, choosing water, and checking his thunder, for the following reason:

He stopt, for fear, thus violently driv'n,  
The sparks should catch his axle-tree of heav'n.  
Rememb'ring in the fates, a time when fire  
Should to the battlements of heav'n aspire,  
And all his blazing worlds above should burn,  
And all th' inferior globe to cinders turn.

DRYDEN—*Garth's Ovid. b. i. l. 346—350.*

## LECTURE VI.

NOTE 1.—See page 181, and 182.

NOTE 2.—It is impossible to read the account given by Moses of the meeting of Jacob and Joseph, without calling to mind the masterly description furnished by Homer; in his *Odyssey*, of the discovery of Ulysses to Telemachus; and a very slight parallel will shew the superiority of the sacred historian over the genius of even Homer.

*Odys. lib. xvi, l. 188, 189: 213, 214, 215.*

“I am thy father. O my son! my son!  
That father, for whose sake thy days have run  
One scene of woe; to endless cares consign’d,  
And outraged by the wrongs of base mankind.”

---

“He spoke and sat. The prince with transport flew,  
Hung round his neck while tears his cheek bedew;  
Nor less the father pour’d a social flood!  
They wept abundant, and they wept aloud.

*Pope’s Homer’s Odyssey. b. xvi, l. 206—209: 234—237.*

“And he wept aloud—And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph. Doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you; and they came near: and he said, I am Joseph, your brother whom ye sold into Egypt.”——“And he fell upon his brother Benjamin’s neck and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.”

——“And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father to Goshen; and presented himself unto him: and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive.”

Mr. Pope, in his notes on this beautiful passage in Homer, says —“This book (i. e. *xvi*) in general is very beautiful in the original; the discovery of Ulysses to Telemachus is particularly tender and affecting. It has some resemblance with that of Joseph’s discovery of himself to his brethren, and it may not perhaps be disagreeable to see how two such authors describe the same passion.”

## MOSES.

I am Joseph—  
 I am your brother Joseph—  
 And he wept aloud—  
 And he fell on his brother's  
 neck, and wept——

## HOMER.

"I am Ulysses—  
 I, my son, am he—  
 He wept abundant—  
 And he wept aloud!"

"But it must be owned that Homer falls infinitely short of Moses: the history of Joseph cannot be read without the utmost touches of compassion and transport. There is a majestic simplicity in the whole relation, and such an affecting portrait of human nature, that it overwhelms us with vicissitudes of joy and sorrow. This is a pregnant instance how much the best of heathen writers is inferior to the divine historian upon a parallel subject."

In these just sentiments I most heartily concur. And it would most amply repay any reader capable of understanding the original, to compare the whole of Homer's narration in *Odyss.* lib. xvi, from line 172 to line 232, with that of Moses in *Gen.* xlv, throughout, and xlv, 28—30. It will be soon seen to whom we must yield the palm of excellence.

## LECTURE VIII.

NOTE 1.—The discussion respecting the nature of the miracles performed by the magicians, which was delivered in the Lecture, because it would have prolonged the exercise beyond all reasonable bounds, because the opposite opinions of different writers might have bewildered the attention of hearers, and because it would have digressed too far from the object, and would have broken the chain of the narrative, may perhaps not be deemed uninteresting as an appendix, and may be allowed the place of a note.

The sentiments of the writers of the *ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA* are thus expressed:

"The first magicians of whom we read are those who in Egypt opposed Moses. And we are told, that when Aaron cast down his rod, and it became a serpent, they also did the like with their enchantments; 'for they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents.' This was a phenomenon which, it must be confessed, had a very miraculous appear-

ance; and yet there seems to have been nothing in it which might not have been effected by slight of hand. The Egyptians, and perhaps the inhabitants of every country where serpents abound, have the art of depriving them of the power to do mischief, so that they may be handled without danger. It was easy for the magicians, who were favored by the court, to pretend that they changed their rods into serpents, by dexterously substituting one of those animals in place of the rod. In like manner they might pretend to change water into blood, and to produce frogs; for *if* Moses gave in these instances, as as we know he did in others, any previous information of the nature of the miracles which were to be wrought, the magicians might easily provide themselves in a quantity of blood and number of frogs sufficient to answer their purpose of deceiving the people. Beyond this, however, their power could not go. It stopped where that of all workers in legerdemain must have stopt—at the failure of proper materials to work with. Egypt abounds with serpents; blood could be easily procured; and without difficulty they might have frogs from the river: but when Moses produced lice from the dust of the ground, the magicians, who had it not in their power to collect a sufficient quantity of these animals, were compelled to own this to be an effect of divine agency.”

*Encyclop. Brit.* Vol. x. Pt. II. Art. MAGIC.

I am neither convinced by this reasoning, nor can admit into my belief, this representation. It goes upon the supposition that Moses announced his miracles previous to the performance of them, which it is admitted he did in some instances, but it cannot be proved that he did it in all, neither does it appear from the sacred history, that he did it in relation especially to the first miracle. Whatever were their skill in legerdemain, it would cost them some trouble to conceal the quantity of serpents, frogs, blood, &c. necessary to rival the miracles of Moses; and if there was not something like rivalry, and *that* successful rivalry, it was not a principle on which Pharaoh could be encouraged; and the circumstance of the magicians performing correspondent miracles with those of Moses, appears to be *that*, in the first instance, upon which his heart was hardened. And it is improbable that Moses should not have the power to detect the imposition, and to expose the cheat, which would

certainly have been both his duty, and his interest, if the fact were as this hypothesis supposes.

The learned writers of the Ancient Universal History, state fairly the divided sentiments of different commentators on this difficult subject, but appear to lean to the opinion that these miracles were performed by the agency of evil spirits, and not by legerdemain. They thus express their sentiments generally, on the possibility of the operations of such spirits. "That such a commerce is, or at least formerly was, possible, we cannot but confess; and we conceive it very difficult to account for several passages in scripture, without allowing it to have been practised. However, much the greater part of what has been attributed to this sort of magic, was undoubtedly the effect of imposture and delusion, which have been so apparent in several instances, as to tempt one almost to believe the same of all the rest." *Anc. Univ. Hist.* Vol. I. b. i. chap. 3. p. 587.

Upon the miracles in question their ideas are expressed in language still more explicit. They state the two following reasons as evidences generally produced in favor of the opinion, that these miracles were wrought by the agency of evil spirits: "First, because the scriptures of the Old and New Testament seem to attribute some such power to evil spirits; and secondly, because Moses expressed himself in such terms as manifestly shew, that they really imitated him in all those wonders they wrought." They go on to criticise the express phrases which he used in describing the miracles of the magicians. He says, that "*they cast down every man his rod, and they BECAME serpents.*" They assign three reasons why God suffered them thus to contend against the wonders wrought by Moses, and to produce similar phenomena. "First, it was necessary that these magicians should be suffered to exert the utmost of their power against Moses, in order to clear him from the imputation of magic." "Secondly, it was necessary in order to confirm the faith of the wavering and desponding Israelites, by making them see the difference between Moses acting by the power of God, and the sorcerers by that of Satan. And lastly, in order to preserve them afterwards from being seduced by any false miracles from the true worship of God."

*An. Univ. Hist.* Vol. II, b. i. chap. 7. p. 562. note E.

This representation appears to me to accord better with the Mosaic history, than the foregoing one.

Dr. HENRY HUNTER, with eloquence peculiar to himself, exhibits a strong reason for the permission given to the magicians partially to imitate the miracles of Moses. "Reasoning man will ask, Why were not impiety and infidelity checked in their very first attempt? Why were the demons of Egypt left in possession of the slightest vestige of power, to oppose, or to imitate the mighty power of God? why grant to Pharaoh and his magicians, even the momentary triumph of their incantations? The reason is obvious. Had the Egyptian enchantments been attended with no success, and produced no effect, infidelity had its plea at hand. 'Your pretended miracle is mere illusion, an attempt to mislead our understanding, by imposing upon our senses. Though we cannot produce this particular effect, perform this particular trick, by our art, we can effect wonders equally or much more astonishing. But, by being permitted to succeed in their first effort, and to rival Moses and Aaron so far, in power and reputation, they are insensibly drawn in, to give their sanction to the sign performed by the Hebrews, for the sake of their own credit; and no sooner is it stamped for currency, with their image and superscription, than they and their abettors are confounded, by seeing the wretched impression of their art effaced, annihilated; and no image remains visible but that of the living and true God. The power which swallowed up the magicians' rods, could as easily have prevented the transmutation; but the confutation is much more complete by the one than it would have been by the other. Impiety has shut her own mouth, and infidelity stands stripped of her last, and only plea."

*Hunter's Sacred Biog.* Vol. III, Lect. V. p. 115—117.

The truly great and estimable SAURIN, with equal ability and success, in an admirable and compact chain of reasoning, which however beautiful, cannot, on account of its copiousness, be admitted into this note, places the subject in four points of view. He tries it, first, by "the narrative of Moses;" secondly, by "the history of enchantments transmitted by every age;" thirdly, by "metaphysical speculations;" and fourthly, "at the tribunal of religion;" and in each of these modes of discussion, proves, that we shall find reasons for suspending our judgment on this mysterious subject.

*Consult Saur. Disc. &c. sur la Bible; Tom. I. disc. xlvi, fol.*

To this modest and ingenuous confession, I do most cheerfully subscribe.

After such a declaration, from such a man as Saurin, it would ill become me to attempt to determine upon so nice a point. But after so large statements of the views of others and such free comments upon them, it may perhaps be expected that I should as frankly avow my own opinion. Dr. GEDDES, whose criticisms are often estimable, yet whose assertions are sometimes announced without a pretension to reasoning, and whose conclusions are almost always levelled avowedly against the authority of Moses, has never discovered the traits which I have described, more decidedly than in his remarks on the present subject. He notices the opinion of legerdemain, and says, "the text is expressly against all such interpretations: and we may as well say, that the rod of Moses was not a real rod, as that the rods of the magicians were not real rods."—He differs, however, from every solution which ever has been, or perhaps ever can be, given; and declares, "It would be wiser, perhaps, although not so honest, to say nothing at all; but that is not my manner: I must say what I think; let others think and speak as they please." And what is this opinion, which a professedly *christian* divine could entertain, and which his fidelity prompted him to publish to the world? "I am clearly of opinion that neither the magicians of Pharaoh, nor the legislator of the Hebrews, changed their rods into serpents, any more than the sorceress Circe turned the companions of Ulysses into swine: but that either the Hebrew historian, whoever he was, invented the whole story; or that, if ever any such trial of magical skill took place, the deception was equal on both sides."

*Geddes' Crit. Rem. Vol. I. on Exod. viii, p. 181, &c.*

And this is Biblical Criticism! And this is fair, candid reasoning! And this is learned and liberal research! What then is to be deemed arrogant, unqualified assertion? What can be accounted indecent levity, and disrespectful trifling? If he did not blush to write such a passage, I should blush to comment upon it, so as to attempt a serious refutation of it! It was not thus that Jesus Christ himself spoke, and thought, of Moses, of his writings, and of his authority.

With no less of integrity, I will candidly avow the opinion which I am inclined to form upon a subject concerning which I dare not attempt to decide; and without presuming to press,

my sentiment upon any reader, I shall state it as briefly as possible, with the reasons upon which I hold it. Upon the whole, I think,

1. *That both the miracles performed by Moses, and those wrought by the magicians were real.* For had not this been the case, would not Moses as easily have detected the imposition, as Elijah silenced the prophets of Baal? Has the Mosaic account given the slightest intimation that they were phantoms? On the contrary, has he not spoken of them in the same terms, as he speaks of his own? I am also inclined to think,

2. *That the magicians knew not the extent of their own powers.* In making the experiment, they obeyed the command of Pharaoh: they were doubtless prepared to do their best, and to use whatever deception the circumstances of the moment might allow. It is evident that they tried all the miracles of Moses, and could succeed but in a few; a decisive proof that they knew not where their power would be stayed, or to what point it would be permitted to extend. Perhaps they were as much surprised at their success, as the spectators could be, in the first instance: So convinced were they of divine agency on the suspension of their partial power, that they confessed "this is the finger of God." But the miracle at which their agency ceased, was as easy to be performed, to all appearance, as those in which they succeeded; and the inference appears to be, that they were not effected by the power of art. It appears to me,

3. *That they must have performed these miracles by the permission, and under the power, of God.* And when this power was withheld from them, and continued to Moses, they instantly acknowledged the hand of Deity.

4. Admitting that both Moses and the magicians wrought their respective miracles by the power or permission of God, when *their* capacity to effect them ceased, and *that* of Moses remained, a decisive evidence was afforded of *the truth of his mission.*

5. The phrase, "they did it by their enchantments," does not appear to me to destroy this hypothesis, but only to mean, *that they used some form and parade*, to impress the minds of the spectators with veneration of their power and wisdom, and to secure to themselves the credit and fame of their success. This parade, however, availed them nothing, when their per-

mission to work miracles expired, and they were compelled to acknowledge the interposition of divine power.

In respect to this opinion, which is submitted with diffidence, the reader will form his own conclusion, of its probability or the contrary. I will not avouch that it is original, although if it be borrowed, I cannot recollect the source from whence I drew it, nor of course make my acknowledgements. It is more than probable that I have met with it, in the course of reading, and treasured it up from its coincidence with my own views! but if I could trace it to its author, I would not hesitate to give a full reference to his own statement. It is common to every man who endeavors to digest what he reads, to mingle the thoughts of others with his own; and it is not always easy to determine, which of our stores we may claim as original, and which we ought to acknowledge as borrowed: nor to distinguish between that which we conceive and that which we only remember.

NOTE 2.—Respecting the term of Israel's bondage, the writers of the Ancient Universal History, afford the following ingenious, and, as it appears to me, just solution.

"It is plain, that the four hundred years of Abram's seed sojourning in a strange land, must be reckoned not from their coming into Egypt, but from the birth of Isaac. For all the time of their sojourning in the land of Canaan, Gerar, or any other, was still in a strange land, in which they had not a foot of ground, if we except the cave of Maehpelah. As to what is added that they shall likewise serve, and be ill-treated, it is commonly understood to be spoken circumstantially, and might be put in a parenthesis, thus, 'they shall sojourn and be strangers (and likewise serve and be oppressed) during the space of four hundred years,' as St. Austin, and others, have fully proved. Accordingly we find Isaac oppressed in Gerar, his wells filled up by its inhabitants, and himself forced still farther from them, and Jacob served, and was oppressed by Laban near twenty years, yet neither of them labored under a continual oppression. The Egyptian servitude did not commence till after Joseph and all his brethren were dead; before *that*, the Israelites lived in peace and plenty. Allowing, therefore, that Levi was forty-four years of age at his first coming into Egypt, which is the most that can be supposed, he must have lived

ninety-three years in Egypt, because the text tells us, that he died in the 137th year of his age. And these 93 years being subtracted from 215, the time of their abode there, there will remain but 122 years of thralldom, even supposing it to have began immediately after his death. The natural sense therefore of this prophecy to Abraham can be only this, that his seed, from Isaac on, should be strangers in the land, that was not theirs, during the space of 400 years, during some part of which they should be oppressed, afflicted, and at length brought under bondage; which term being expired, they should find a happy deliverance."

*Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. ii. b. i, chap. 7 note K.*

NOTE 3.—In the account which Justin has given, in his abridgment of Trogus Pompeius, of Moses, and of the deliverance of Israel, there is an error, arising from his linking this narrative too closely with the history of Joseph, (for he relates this departure in the very same chapter in which he speaks of Joseph,) and in his supposing Moses to be the son of Joseph. This premised, we subjoin his testimony on these facts.

*Just. Hist. lib. xxxvi, cap. ii.*

"Moses was his son, whose beauty of person recommended him, no less than his inheritance of his father's science. But the Egyptians, because they were afflicted with a scab and leprosy, admonished by an oracle, expelled him, with the diseased, from the borders of Egypt, lest the malady should spread generally."

NOTE 4.—Testimony preserved in Diodorus Siculus, respecting the division of the Red Sea. "Among the Ichthyophagi, the native inhabitants of the spot, a tradition is given, which is preserved from their ancestors, that by a great ebb of the waters, the whole bosom of the gulf became dry, disclosing its weeds, the sea rolling upon the opposite shore. But the bare earth having been rendered visible from the very bottom of the abyss, the tide returning in its strength, restored the passage once more to its former condition.

*Diod. Sic. lib. iii, p. 122.*

## LECTURE IX.

NOTE 1.—Grotius has distinctly enumerated the testimonies from ancient writers, which we mentioned generally: to which he has added others which we did not produce. He says, respecting the Orphic verses, “the great Scaliger has mended the passage, by changing a letter; and instead of reading the word *υλογεννης*, as Eusebius, in his Prep. Evan. lib. xiii. cap. 12. quotes it from Aristobulus, he bids us read it *υδρογεννης*”—*born of the water*. His quotation from Strabo is not inserted here, because, while his testimony to the great character of Moses is decisive, he has mingled the fable of tradition so entirely with his evidence, that the passage would not be worthy the room it would occupy in this note. It is in his xvi. book. There is a remarkable testimony in Diodorus Siculus, in the first book of his history, comprised in a single sentence. He had been speaking of those who assert that the gods were the authors of their laws—and adds, *παρὰ Ἰουδαίοις δὲ Μωσὴν τὸν Ἰσὼ επικαλούμενον Θεόν*—*As Moses, who, among the Jews, called God, Ισὼ (Ino.)* Grotius quotes this passage also, and says, that by *Ισὼ (Ino.)* *יהוה (Jehovah.)* is intended; and that the name was so pronounced, “by the oracles, in the Orphic verses, by the Basilidian heretics, and other Gnostics:” also, with little variation, “by the Tyrians.” These quotations, with his important remarks, are to be found in his truth of the Christian Religion: book i. sect. 16. notes 83—101.

NOTE 2. Testimony of Josephus, to the early settlement of the Jews in Canaan. *Thus far Manetho. Therefore estimating the time from the beginning of those years, (alluding to some foregoing calculations according to Manetho’s history) it will appear, that our ancestors, whom they call shepherds, migrated from Egypt, and inhabited this country, 393 years before Danaus came to Argos, which is nevertheless celebrated by the Greeks for antiquity.* Josephus adds, “that two things are evident from Manetho’s account: first, that the Jews came from another place to Egypt: secondly, that they left them again, and that nearly a thousand years before the Trojan war.” Lowth says, that this calculation is *double* the true distance of time between these events. However, the establishment of

the Jews in Canaan, is much earlier than any Grecian writer, or history. See *Josephus, Appion. Tom. II. lib. i. p. 1339. Hudsoni edit.*

## LECTURE X.

NOTE 1.—It would have been foreign from the immediate object of the preceding Lecture, to have entered into any discussion of the appearance of Samuel to Saul: but I cannot forbear entering my individual protest against the opinions, either that the sorceress made some person in her interest personate the apparition of the prophet, or that some demon attempted such a personification. I believe that it was indeed the spirit of Samuel—and I shall subjoin, as the best illustration of my own views, the following able testimonies.

The ingenious writers of the *ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA* reason thus—

“Some have thought there was nothing more than a trick, by which a cunning woman imposed upon Saul’s credulity, making him believe that some confidant of her own was the ghost of Samuel. But had that been the case, she would undoubtedly have made the pretended Samuel’s answer, as pleasing to the king as possible, both to save her own life, which appears from the context to have been in danger, and likewise to have procured the larger reward. She would never have told her sovereign, she durst not have told him, that he himself should be shortly slain, and his sons with him; and that the host of Israel should be delivered into the hand of the Philistines.\* For this reason many critics, both Jewish and Christian, have supposed that the apparition was really a demon, or evil angel, by whose assistance the woman was accustomed to work wonders, and to foretel future events. But it is surely very incredible, that one of the apostate spirits of hell, should have upbraided Saul for applying to a *sorceress*, or should have accosted him in such words as these: ‘Why hast thou disquieted *me* to bring me up? Wherefore dost thou ask of *me*, seeing the *Lord* is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? For the *Lord* hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbor, even to David. Because thou obeyedst not

\*It was impossible that she could have prejudged the event of a battle than which nothing is more uncertain.

the voice of the *Lord*, therefore the *Lord* hath done this thing to thee this day.' It is to be observed farther, that what was here denounced against Saul was really prophetic, and that the event answered to the prophecy in every particular. Now, though we do not deny that there are created spirits of penetration vastly superior to that of the most enlarged human understanding; yet we dare maintain, that no finite intelligence could by its own mere capacity have ever found out the precise time of the two armies engaging, the success of the Philistines, the consequences of the victory, and the very names of the persons that were to fall in the battle. Saul and his sons were indeed men of tried bravery, and therefore likely to expose themselves to the greatest danger; but after the menaces which he received from the apparition, he would have been impelled, one should think, by common prudence, either to chicanery with the enemy, or to retire from the field without exposing himself, his sons, and the whole army to certain and inevitable destruction; and his acting differently, with the consequences of his conduct, were events which no limited understanding could either foresee or certainly foretell. If to these circumstances we add the suddenness of Samuel's appearance, with the effect which it had upon the sorceress herself, we shall find reason to believe that the apparition was that of no evil demon. There is not, we believe, upon record, another instance of any person's pretending to raise a ghost from below, without previously using some magical rites, or some form of incantation. As nothing of that kind is mentioned in the case before us, it is probable that Samuel appeared before he was called. It is likewise evident from the narrative, that the apparition was not what the woman expected; for we are told that when she saw Samuel, she cried out for fear. And when the king exhorted her not to be afraid, and asked what she saw, 'the woman said, I see gods (*elohim*) ascending out of the earth.' Now, had she been accustomed to do such feats, and known that what she saw was only her subservient demon, it is not conceivable that she could have been so frightened, or have mistaken her familiar for *elohim* in any sense in which that word can be taken. We are therefore strongly inclined to adopt the opinion of those who hold that it was Samuel himself who appeared and prophesied, not called up by the wretched woman or her demons, but, to her utter confusion, and the

disgrace of her art, sent by God to rebuke Saul's madness in a most affecting and mortifying way, and to deter all others from ever applying to magicians or demons for assistance when refused comfort from Heaven. For though this hypothesis may, to a superficial thinker, seem to transgress the rule of Horace—*nec Deus intersit*, &c.—which is as applicable to the interpretation of scripture, as to the introduction of supernatural agency in human compositions; yet he who has studied the theocratical constitution of Israel, the nature of the office which was there termed regal, and by what means the administration was in emergencies conducted, will have a different opinion, and at once perceive the *dignus vindice nodus*."

*Encyc. Brit. Vol. X. pt. ii. art. MAGIC:*

Of the same opinion is the pious Mr. HERVEY—

"1 Sam. xxviii, 19.—On this place the DUTCH translator of the Meditations has added a note; to correct, very probably, what he supposes a mistake. On the same supposition, I presume, the compilers of our Rubric ordered the last verse of Eccles. xlvi, to be omitted, in the daily service of the Church. But that the sentiment, hinted above," (an opinion coinciding with that just stated) "is strictly true; that it was שמואל דורא SAMUEL HIMSELF (not an infernal spirit, personating the prophet) who appeared to the female necromancer at Endor; appeared not in compliance with any diabolical incantation, but in pursuance of the divine commission; this, I think, is fully proved in the HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE OF DAVID, vol. I. chap. 23."

*Heyvey's Medit. Vol. I. p. 250' notes. Heptinstall's edit.*

NOTE 2.—In the translation of David's lamentation over Jonathan, I have not departed from the literal rendering of our own Bible, but where it appeared to me that the reading was amended or elucidated by the alteration. In rendering the 21st verse, "there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, *the armor of the anointed with oil*;" I have followed the translation of Dr. Geddes: who has the following note on the word 'armour'—"From the small change of one letter into another, of a very similar form, arises this opposite rendering. Interpreters made a shift to translate the present text thus: *as if he had not been anointed with oil*. By what rules of translation I know not." His translation of this lamentation is singularly beautiful throughout. He renders the beginning

of it—"O *antelope* of Israel! pierced on thine own mountains!" This rendering is correctly literal: but as the word חֶצְבִּי also signifies *ornamentum*,\* I have preferred the rendering "O *beauty* of Israel, &c." as in the Lecture.

NOTE 3.—Testimony of Menander, the historian, to the drought in the days of Elijah, preserved by Josephus:

—"Menander also notes this defect of rain in the acts of Ithobal, king of the Tyrians, speaking thus: "There was a deficiency of rain from the month of October, until October in the succeeding year. But he indeed praying there followed much thunder. He built the city of Botrys in Phenicia, and Auza in Lybia." And certainly he relates these things of the drought which happened in the time of Ahab, for at that time Ithobal did reign over the Tyrians, as Menander himself writes."

*Joseph. Antiq. Jud. Tom. I. lib. viii, cap. xiii, p. 378. Hudsoni edit.*

Testimonies of Julian and of Cyprian, quoted by Grotius, relative to the fire which consumed the sacrifice of Elijah. Julianus in libro Cyrilli decimo.

Προσάγει δὲ ἑρμὴ βρομὴ καὶ θυμὸν παρητεσάτι. πῦρ γὰρ, φησὶν, ἔκαστῳ ἁγίῳ ἐπὶ Μωϋσεὺς τὰς θυσίας ἀναλίσκειν ἀπαξ τὸ ἐπὶ Μωϋσεὺς ἐγένετο, καὶ ἐπὶ Ηλίου τὸ Θεόβητε πάλιν μετὰ πολλὰς ἡμέρας.—Vide sequentia de igne cœlesti; Cyprianus Testimoniorum III. Item in sacrificiis quæcunque accepta habebat Deus, descendebat ignis de cœlo qui sacrificata consumeret." "Julian in the tenth book of Cyril: 'Ye refuse to bring sacrifices to the altar, and to present them, because that fire does not descend from heaven to consume the victims, as in the time of Moses. This happened indeed to Moses, and long after also to Elijah the Tishbite.'" See what follows also concerning the fire from heaven; Cyprian, in the Third of their Testimonies, says—"That in the sacrifices, what soever had acceptance with God, fire came down from heaven which consumed the things offered."

*Grotius de Ver. Relig. Christ. sect. xvi, not. 106.*

\*See Taylor's Hebrew Concordance on the word חֶצְבִּי

## LECTURE XI.

NOTE 1.—See page 298.

NOTE 2.—Testimony of Menander to the character and acts of Shalmaneser, preserved in Josephus, and translated in this Lecture.

NOTE 3.—The following description of the temple of Belus is extracted from the writers of the Ancient Universal History, vol. I. book i. chap. 2, page 417. Dublin edit. 1745. It is necessary to mention the edition when a reference is made to the page, because there are several editions which differ materially in this respect.

“Herodotus tells us, it was a furlong in length, and as much in breadth; and Strabo determines the height to have been a furlong, that is, the eighth part of a mile, or six hundred and sixty feet, which is itself prodigious; for thereby it appears to have exceeded the greatest of the Egyptian pyramids in height, one hundred and seventy-nine feet, though it fell short of it at the base by thirty-three. It consisted of eight square towers one above another, gradually decreasing in breadth; which, with the winding of the stairs from the top to the bottom on the outside, gave it the resemblance of a pyramid, as Strabo calls it. This antique form, joined to the extraordinary height of the structure, easily induces us to believe it to be the same tower mentioned by Moses; Nebuchadnezzar finishing the design, which the sons of Noah were obliged, by the confusion of tongues, to leave unexecuted.” And again they add in a note:

“The words of Herodotus are: *Ἐν μέσῳ δὲ τοῦ ἑξ πυργὸς ὁλοκλήρως οἰκοδομηταί, σταδίῃ καὶ τὸ μῆκος καὶ τὸ εὖρος, καὶ ἐπὶ τεττῶν τῶν πυργῶν ἄλλος πυργὸς ἐπίβηκε, καὶ ἕτερος μάλα ἐπὶ τεττῶν, μέχρις οὐ οκτὼ πυργῶν.* “In the midst of the temple a solid tower is built, of a furlong in length and as much in breadth; and upon this tower another tower is erected, and another again upon that, and so on to the number of eight towers.’ It is true, the word *μῆκος* which we here translate *length*, may also signify *height*: but some authors having thence supposed, as the construction seems to require, that the first tower was a furlong high, and concluding the other seven to be of equal height, have made the whole a mile high; to avoid which extravagant consequence, it seems more reasonable to

understand Herodotus as we have rendered the passage, unless the furlong be taken for the height of all the eight towers." And it appears to me that the construction of the passage will not allow this last conclusion: for whether the word *μῆκος* be rendered *height* or *length*, it evidently refers to the *first* tower; and it is expressly said that "another was built upon this"—and so on. I conclude, therefore, that these words of Herodotus refer to its length, and its breadth, without adverting at all to its height, which Strabo says was also a furlong. According to this last mentioned author it was exactly a furlong every way.

NOTE 4.—See page 313.

NOTE 5.—Seventy years had been predicted as the term of the captivity of Judah. Some have computed from the fourth year of Jehoiakim to the first issuing of Cyrus' decree. Others from the destruction of Jerusalem to the publication of Darius' decree, in the fourth year of his reign. The discussion of this point is immaterial: since either way seventy years were accomplished.

The writers of the Ancient Univ. Hist. date it from the first taking of the city in the reign of Jehoiakim, and they say, in a note, "This Usher proves to have happened in the ninth month, from the anniversary fast, which the Jews have kept ever since in memory of that calamity. This is the more worth observing, *because the seventy years captivity foretold by Jeremiah, must be reckoned from this epocha.*"

NOTE 6.—The following description of the Simoom is given in Bruce's Travels, vol. vi, p. 461, 462. Edinburgh 8vo. edit. of 1804. He says, "that an extreme redness in the air was a sure presage of the coming of the Simoom." And his conductor through the desert warned him and his servants "that upon the coming of the Simoom" they "should fall upon their faces, with their mouths upon the earth, so as not to partake of the outward air, as long as they could hold their breath." And he thus describes its fearful approach and effects. "At eleven o'clock, while we contemplated with great pleasure the rugged top of Chiggre, to which we were fast approaching, and where we were to solace ourselves with plenty of good water, Idris cried out with a loud voice, Fall upon your faces, for here is the

stmoom! I saw from the south-east a haze come, in color like the purple part of the rainbow, but not so compressed or thick. It did not occupy twenty yards in breadth, and was about twelve feet high from the ground. It was a kind of blush upon the air, and it moved very rapidly, for I scarce could turn to fall upon the ground with my head to the northward, when I felt the heat of its current plainly upon my face. We all lay flat upon the ground, as if dead, till Idris told us it was blown over. The meteor, or purple haze, which I saw, was indeed passed, but the light air that still blew was of heat to threaten suffocation. For my part, I found distinctly in my breast that I had imbibed a part of it, nor was I free of an asthmatic sensation till I had been some months in Italy, at the baths of Poretta, near two years afterwards."

NOTE 7.—We do not sufficiently consider under whose direction are the desolations of the earth, and by whose permission the hero conquers. Jeremiah awfully unveils the cause of Judah's and Israel's calamities, when he says, "The Lord was an enemy: he hath swallowed up Israel, he hath swallowed up all her palaces; he hath destroyed his strong holds, and hath increased in the daughter of Judah mourning and lamentation. And he hath violently taken away his tabernacle, as if it were of a garden, he hath destroyed his places of the assembly: the Lord hath caused the solemn feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion, and hath despised in the indignation of his anger the king and the priest."

*Lamentations ii, 5, 6.*

And this reminds me of a most beautiful passage in Virgil, in which the poet represents the deities engaged in the subversion of Troy.

"Here, where you behold bulwarks cast down, and stones rent from stones, and waving smoke mingling with dust, Neptune shakes the walls, and the heaving foundations, with his great trident, and overthrows the whole city from its bases. There, Juno, the most inexorable, occupies the Scæan gates, and girded with a sword, calls the raging army of the allies from their ships. Then behold Tritonian Pallas sits upon the highest citadels, effulgent on a cloud, and with her terrible ægis. Jupiter himself supplies courage, and renewed forces, to the Grecians; himself stirs up the gods against the Trojan arms!"

## LECTURE XII.

NOTE 1.—see page 325.

NOTE 2.—I have translated *εἶδοντες αὐτὸν τὸν ἀστὲρα τὴν ἀνατολὴν* —*We of the East have seen his star*,—referring the term *East*, not to the part of the heavens in which the star appeared, but to the country whence they came. I believe that I am not alone in this translation; and if I mistake not, this, or a very similar one, is the rendering of Dr. Cambell, in his new translation of the gospels. Another explanation is offered by Poole in his learned and laborious Synopsis—which is, *We have his star at its rising*; and he adds, that the Greek astronomer use the term *ἀνατολή* to imply the rising of any heavenly body, and *δύσις* for its setting. Thus the passage may mean—we saw this star from its very first appearance, at the moment when it began to shine in the heavens; and its position appeared to us to mark its relation to Judea. And this learned writer, moreover, informs us, that the professors of astrology (and such perhaps were these Magi) were accustomed to assign certain spaces of the heavens, in their calculations, to certain correspondent regions of the earth. “*Ad exortum ejus, sive, quem oriretur: Huc facit, 1 quod Græcis astronomis ortus stellarum dicitur ἀνατολή, et, ἐπὶ τολῆ (ut ἀνατολή ἡλίου, ortus solis, Apoc. 7 2. et occasus earum, δύσις: 2 quod oriens, sicut et occidens, plurimum. ἀνατολαί et, ἀδύσεις, plerumque exprimuntur, Matt. 8, 11 et 24, 27, Luc. 13 29. Credibile est, apparuisse hanc stellam in ea cæli parte, quæ consensu astrologorum ad Judæam pertinuit, ut solent ab ejus artis professoribus terrarum regiones certis cæli spatiis ascribi: Quæ dico, non quod superstitiosis ariolationibus patrocinari cupiam, sed quod arbitrer Deum ita res disponere, ut ea, quæ, sive jure, sive injuria, magni apud homines fiunt, interdum trahat in veri testimonium.*”

*Pol Synops. Crit. Tom. IV in Matt. cap. ii, 2.*

NOTE 3.—Testimonies of Pliny and of Chalcidius, relative to the appearance of this luminous body: The passages are thus extracted and quoted by the author whose remarks form the substance of the former note.

Huc et illud PLINII, (qui ex obscura fama auditum refert, qua de re scripsit, ipse ignorans) qui “apparuisse aliquando” scribit “Cometam candidum, argenteo crine ita refulgentem, ut

vix contueri licuerit, specieque humana Deieffigiem inse ostendentem."

Testimonium CHALCIDII PLATONICI (modo *γνησιος* sit) appositum est, "Sane notanda est," inquit, "alia sanctior et venerabilior historia, quæ perhibet de ortu stellæ cujusdam, non morbos mortesque denunciantem, sed descensum Dei venerabilis ad humanæ conversationis, rerumque mortalium, gratiam; quam stellam cum nocturno itinere suspexissent Chaldæorum profecto sapientes viri, et consideratione rerum cœlestium satis exercitati, quisque dicuntur recentis Dei ortum, repertaque illa Majestate pueril, venerati esse, et vota Deo tanto convenientia nuncupasse."

*Poli Synopsis Crit. Tom. IV. in Matt. cap. ii, 2.*

Josephus might well add, that he was a man "totally alienated from humanity"—and express his surprise that his thirst of blood should remain in those last moments, when most men are disposed to bury even the injuries which they have received in eternal oblivion! His family had the humanity to break their vow to him; and immediately upon his death set their illustrious prisoners at liberty.

NOTE 5.—Testimony of Josephus to the life, the sufferings, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ: as also of the unshaken attachment of his followers to him.

*Jos. de Antiq. Jud. Tom. II. lib. xviii, cap. 4, p. 798. Hudsoni edition.*

Some have affirmed that this passage is interpolated: and it is always easy to make affirmations, and to raise objections. The following reasons have always satisfied my mind that it is genuine. 1. It accords well with its connexion, and forms a link with the other parts of the narrative. 2. It agrees in point of time with the facts narrated along with it. 3. It is such a testimony as might be expected from such a man as Josephus: neither enlarged upon with the partiality of friendship (for he was a Jew, and not a Christian) nor disfigured to blot the fidelity of the historian: but related with a conciseness which shews him unwilling to keep back any part of the fact, yet unable to account for the extraordinary circumstances attending it. 4. It would have been a marvellous thing indeed, if Josephus, who died within 93 years after Christ, and who professed to write

every thing worthy recording relative to the Jewish nation, both in its former state, and in the degradation to which it had sunk in his days; should have omitted to speak of an event, nearly contemporary with himself, which was in every one's mouth, which excited such a ferment in his own nation; and while a new sect, springing from this very event, attracted the notice and the persecution of both Jews and Gentiles, and boldly, perseveringly, successfully, disseminated their tenets around him. 5. Origen, who flourished about 200 years after Christ, appeals to this testimony when he says, Εἰ γὰρ τῷ οὐτακαίδεκάτῳ τῆς Ἰσθαικῆς ἀρχαιολαγίας οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, &c. οὗτος αὐτός, καὶ τοιοῦτο ἀπιστοῦν τῷ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ, &c.

*Orig. contra Cels. lib. i, p. 35. Cantab. edit: 1677.*

NOTE 6—Testimonies of Justin Martyr, and of Tertulian, to the facts of the life, the death, and the resurrection of Christ.

JUSTIN MARTYR, speaking of the parting of our Lord's vesture, &c. appeals to the acts of Pilate then extant.

Δε ταῦτα ὅτι γέγονε, δυνασθεῖς μάθετε ἐκ τῶν ἐπὶ Πόντις Πιλάτῳ γενομένων ἀκτῶν.

*Just. Martyr. Apol. prima, p. 56, Thirlbii. edit. 1722.*

This Apology was addressed to the emperor Antoninus Pius.

Again, he challenges Crescens to a public contest on the merits of christianity before the Roman senate.

Καὶ ὅτι ἀληθὴ λέγουσιν, εἰ μὴ ἀννεχθῆσαν ὑμῖν αἱ κοινῶναι τῶν λόγων, εὐτοίμος καὶ ἐφ' ὑμῶν κοινῶναι τῶν ἐρατιστέων παλιν βασιλικὸν δ' αὖ καὶ τὸτο ἔργον εἴη.

*Just. Martyr. Apol. secunda, p. 122, Thirlbii edit. 1722.*

This apology was addressed to the Roman senate. Epiphanius also speaks of the acts of Pilate, and is quoted by the learned and accurate Grotius. See Grot. de Ver. Rel. Christ. lib. ii, sect. ii, in not. 5.

TERTULLIAN thus speaks of the opinion which Tiberias had formed of Christ, and of christianity, from the authentic records which he had received from Palestine, respecting him:

Tiberius ergo, cujus tempore nomen Christianum in seculum intravit, annuntiata sibi ex Syria Palæstina quæ illic veritatem istius divinitatis revelarant detulit ad senatum cum prærogativa suffragii sui. Senatus, quia non ipse probaverat, respuit: Cæsar in sententia mansit, comminatus periculum accusatoribus Christianorum.—Consulite commentarios vestros!

*Tertull. Apologet. p. 6. Lutet. edit. 1634.*

He explains why the will of the emperor alone could not prevail to enrol Christ among the number of the gods, to which

he was so decidedly inclined—*Vetus erat decretum, ne qui deus ab imperatore consecraretur, nisi a senatu probatus. There was an ancient decree that no god should be consecrated by the emperor, unless approved by the senate.* Tertullian would not have dared, at that time, to have affirmed these things, had they not been true: much less would he have thrown out the challenge, "*Consult your records!*"

NOTE 7.—ORIGEN mentions Phlegon's testimony to the darkness at our Lord's crucifixion, as also to the earthquake. *Περί δε της επί Τιβέριου Καίσαρος εκληψέως, & βασιλευσίνος και ο Ιησους εστικεν εσταυρωσθαι, και περι των μεγαλων τότε γενομενων σισμων της γης, ανεγραψε και φλεγων εν τω τριτοκαίδεκατω οικμει του Χρονικων.*

*Orig. contra Cels. p. 80. Cantab. edit. 1677.*

NOTE 8.—To what has been translated from PLINY in the Lecture, may be added his testimony of the rapid spread of Christianity.

"Many of every age, of every rank, and of both sexes, were brought into danger. The contagion of this superstition had spread, not into cities merely, but also into villages, and into fields. The temples were nearly desolate. The most sacred rites for some time were suspended. And scarcely any one was found to purchase victims for them.

*Plin. Epist. lib. x. epist. 97.*

### LECTURE XIII.

It would be a very easy thing to produce evidences from all contemporary historians of the sufferings of the apostles, of their unshaken firmness, and of the undiminished and resistless attractions of christianity; but we shall content ourselves with the selection of a few.

Tacitus relates the fact of the persecution raised against the Christians by Nero, and describes it as attended by "circumstances of the utmost rigor and cruelty."

*Tacit. Annal. lib. xv, cap. 44.*

Suetonius bears the same testimony to the sufferings of these primitive saints, when he says, "The Christians were severely punished—a class of men devoted to a novel and mischievous superstition."

*Suct. Nero Claud. Cas. cap. xvi.*

Pliny describes their worship, while he condemns what he calls their obstinacy, and confesses that they were harmless in

their deportment. "They were accustomed," he says, "to assemble, and to sing hymns to Christ, as to God." *Soliti essent convenire, carmenque Christo quasi Deo dicere*.

*Plin. in Epist.*

An ancient superstition, the worship of Jesus Christ as God is, if it be indeed what it is represented by Unitarians—idolatry!

The ancient fathers bear the same testimony with these profane historians: and they indeed shared the calamities which they described. Justin Martyr says—"So far from repenting of your sins" (in crucifying the Savior) "ye sent men of distinguished talents through every land, to represent Christians as atheists, and to disseminate in their discourses all those evil reports of us which those have raised who knew us not!"

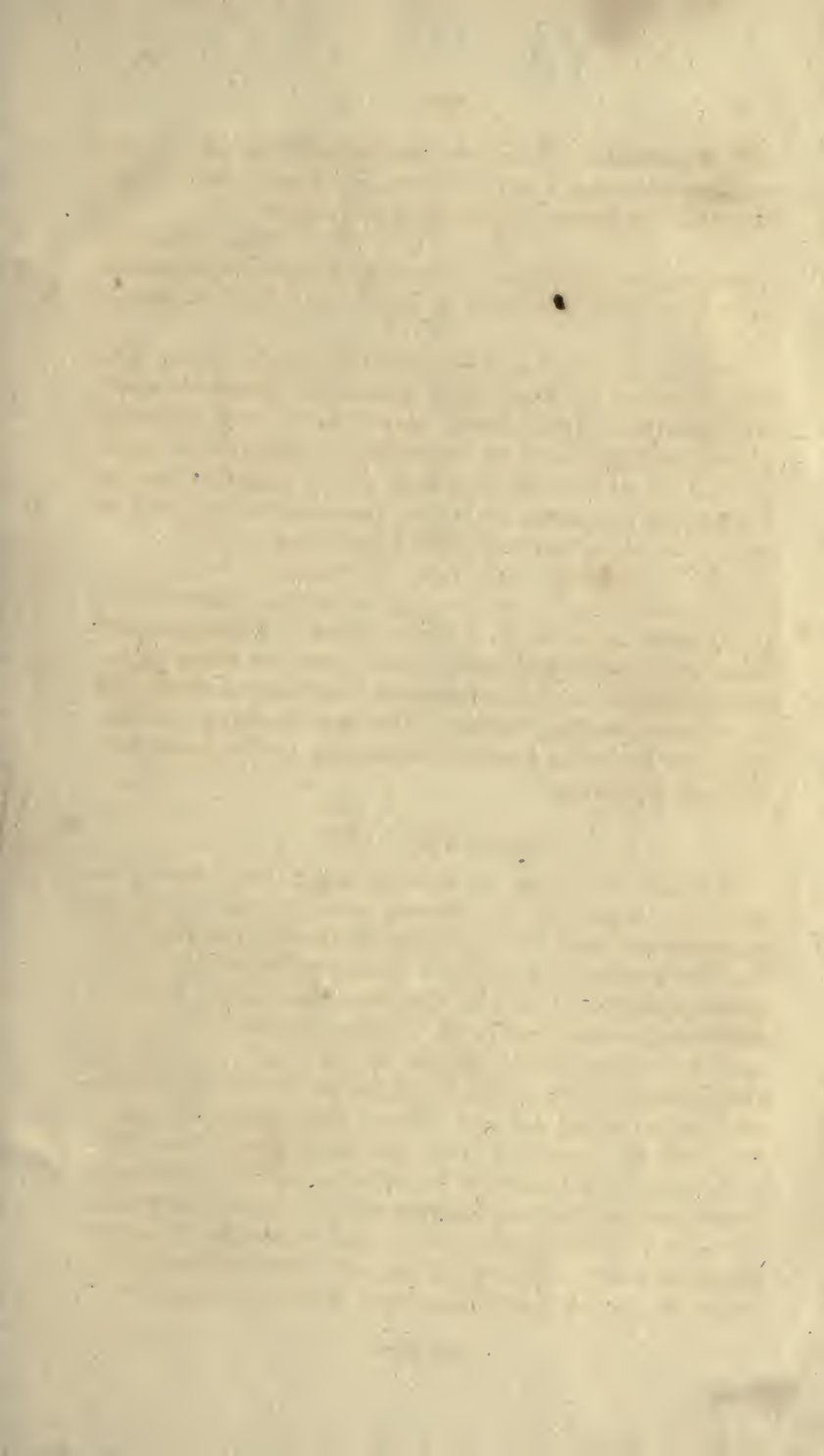
*Just. Mart. Dial. cum Tryph. p. 171. Thirlb.*

Yet, amid all this virulence of opposition, the cause of christianity grew; and while their enemies raved, "To the lions with them," the whole world beheld them rising on every side as willing to suffer, as their adversaries were eager to afflict. But we shall say nothing further. If any man desires a confirmation of the preceding Lecture, he has only to read Justin Martyr, and Tertullian.

## LECTURE XIV.

WE have described the sun as a body of fire. Such it has long been considered: but modern astronomy has shaken this opinion of antiquity. The ingenious Dr. Herschel supposes "that it is an opaque body surrounded by an atmosphere of aphosphoric nature, composed of various transparent and elastic fluids, by the decomposition of which light is produced, and lucid appearances formed of different degrees and intensity." And he concludes that it is even probably an inhabited world. We venture not to hazard an opinion upon this novel hypothesis: the name of Dr. Herschel ranks high in the department of literature which he has chosen. But may I be permitted to recommend to the attention of young persons, studying the principles of astronomy, "Gregory's Lessons Astronomical and Philosophical."—from which the above statement is extracted? They are familiar and instructive, amusing and scientific, at one and the same time.





50 cts



av  
ov  
line

THIS BOOK IS DUE ON THE LAST DATE  
STAMPED BELOW

AN INITIAL FINE OF 25 CENTS

WILL BE ASSESSED FOR FAILURE TO RETURN  
THIS BOOK ON THE DATE DUE. THE PENALTY  
WILL INCREASE TO 50 CENTS ON THE FOURTH  
DAY AND TO \$1.00 ON THE SEVENTH DAY  
OVERDUE.

SEP 16 1943

10 Jul '60 MM

REC'D LD

AUG 17 1960

LD 21-100m-7,'39 (402s)

YB 21764

57786

B5540  
C6

ooks.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

